History and its relevance to Theology: reconsidered with special reference to G. Vico, B. Croce and R.G. Collingwood

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History and Its Relevance to Theology: reconsidered with special reference to G. Vico, B. Croce and R.G. Collingwood.

by

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FOREWORD

or

AN ATTEMPTED CLAIM UPON THE READER'S ATTENTION

"What is the subject of your thesis?"
"The relationship between history and theology."
"Oh." (*sotto voce*)

This is an exchange familiar to anyone working in the area of the relationship between history and theology. If the "Oh" is uttered by an historian, then it may carry with it overtones of a suspicion that history is being meddled with. On the other hand, if the "Oh" is uttered by a theologian it often carries with it the unspoken, largely impatient but slightly apprehensive remark: "Isn't theology already complicated enough without bringing history into it?" This situation presumably accounts in part for the fact that from the historians' side only R.G. Collingwood (now out of fashion, alas) has anything of substance to say about this relationship; and even this is confined to a few suggestive pages. From the theologians' side the situation is hardly better. It is true that a considerable amount of attention has been given to the important task of forming a general Christian attitude to history, or a doctrine of history. However, surprisingly little attention has been given to the at least equally important investigation of the problem of the complex relationship between Christian theology and historical inquiry——or, we might say, between Christian theology and history as the historians know it. The two books to appear so far which deal with this subject explicitly and sustainedly are Richard R. Niebuhr's *Resurrection and Historical Reason* (1957) and T.A. Robert's *History and Christian Apologetic* (1960). Both betray that this discussion is at an early stage.

On the theologians' side at least, this situation indicates a remarkable disinclination to be self-conscious about what has been probably the dominant concern of theology for the past century, i.e., modern Biblical criticism. Modern Biblical criticism has the closest ties with the modern scientific and philo-

sophical world view. Speaking of this world view H.A. Hodges makes the following judgment; a judgment which is just as applicable to theology as it is to philosophy. "We now know that we can know nothing outside the perceived world in space and time, and philosophy must find a new focus, not in a dogmatic science of being, but in a critical study of the conditions which make experience possible. Epistemology replaces ontology." (Wilhelm Dilthey, p.88)

Richard R. Niebuhr helps us to place this whole matter in perspective, as far as the Church is concerned, by boldly declaring that it is "the contemporary counterpart of the reformation of the Church that culminated in the sixteenth century". As at the Reformation, so now, the Church has largely forgotten (i.e., does not have satisfactory categories to deal with) the history out of which it arose. As at the Reformation, so now, the Church is being forced by the exigencies of the present to engage in the self-criticism of re-appraising the past in order that it might arrive once more at the "self-understanding and rebirth of the same historical events as those from which the Apostles received their commission." The following pages are an attempt to contribute to this critical reappraisal.

PART I

HISTORY AND THEOLOGY:
THE PROBLEM OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP.

"A people without history/Is not redeemed from time."

Little Gidding. T.S. Eliot

Chapter I

Introduction.

1. The Problem Defined.

The problem of history has always been with the Christian. Simply and obviously, this situation has been dictated by the fact that Christianity is founded upon an historical event, the Incarnation; and because it is commissioned to find its existence in the world of history.

Christians in every period, when they have concerned themselves with the relationship between faith and history, have dealt with varying emphases with three inter-related but quite distinct problems. The frequent failure to maintain these distinctions has often led to confusion in the discussion of the Christian understanding of history; not least in the contemporary spate of books on this subject.

The first of these problems concerns God's action in history. Do we find in history the definitive revelation of the nature and will of God, or is this revelation supplemented or even threatened by a knowledge of God derived from other sources, e.g. philosophy or mysticism?

The second problem is very closely related to the first; namely, the attitude which is to be taken toward the historical evidence (supremely Holy Scripture) upon which Christianity is founded. This problem is related to but not identical with hermeneutics; at least not as that discipline is usually conceived. This second problem, together with the first, is, in

short, the problem of revelation in a very fundamental aspect. It is in this area that this thesis will be primarily, but not exclusively, concerned.

The third problem concerns the view which the Christian is to take of the development of history (not only "holy history") both past and present. It is this area which, beginning with St. Augustine's concept of the two cities, has received the most self-conscious thought through the centuries. This inquiry as to the meaning of history is commonly called the "philosophy of history"; a subject about which we will have a great deal to say later in this thesis. This is a distinctively Hebrew-Christian concern; one which was not genuinely raised prior to the Hebrew-Christian development. (It is interesting to note that those contemporaries of ours who have been thoroughly estranged from Christianity claim to be totally indifferent to the question of the meaning of history; even in its most secularized forms.) All "philosophy of history", including secularized versions such as that of Hegel and Marx, have a fundamental motivation which is Hebrew-Christian in origin; namely, the search for the meaning of history.(1) Although we will necessarily deal with this ~~third~~ second aspect of the Christian concern with history, it is not the primary concern of this thesis. Above all, no attempt will be made to present history as a rationally coherent whole.

(1) Cf. Lowith, Karl, Meaning in History, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1949, "Introduction".

Another aspect of this third area of concern is that of the Christian's attitude toward the culture and society which surrounds him; towards the culture and society which history has produced, and which in its turn is having its own history. This concern is practical in emphasis, and has the closest possible ties with personal and social ethics. It can profitably be looked upon as the practical application of the individual Christian's own particular attitude toward history which he holds in common with his fellow Christians.

Richard Niebuhr, in his book Christ and Culture,(1) has described in a masterful fashion the various possibilities for the Christian in his relation to culture. In briefest summary these are (together with representative theologians): Christ against culture (Tertullian); the Christ of culture (Ritschl; Schleiermacher); Christ above culture (Clement of Alexandria); Christ and culture in paradox (Paul; Marcion); and Christ the transformer of culture (F.D. Maurice). The actions of every Christian expresses one or more of these possibilities, regardless of whether he is articulate about history or not. By and large the attitude the Christian takes to culture is an aspect of the view he takes of the relationship between Christianity and history as a whole, of the relationship between the action of God and the historical context in which the action takes place.

(1) Niebuhr, H. Richard, Christ and Culture, Harper Torchbooks, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1959.

For example, if one conceives of history as merely the shell in which God's actions take place, then there is little basis or motivation for taking history and culture seriously. One then assumes the attitude which Niebuhr characterizes as "Christ against culture" or "Christ above culture". If, at the other extreme, the Christian sees in history the progressive unfolding of the image of God in man; then the stage is set for the attitude which Niebuhr characterizes as the "Christ of culture", the characteristic attitude of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

It is for this reason that we say that the Christian's attitude to culture is intimately related to his explicit or implicit view of the relationship between God's action and human history. But this is, in turn, inextricably connected with one's attitude to the historical evidence upon which Christianity is founded (the first and second problems under discussion), i.e. one's view of revelation. For example, a radically supernaturalistic view of ~~view of~~ revelation, can only lead consistently to an attitude toward history which places Christ "against" or "above" culture; and this in turn leads to a lack of interest in society and culture. So it is that the Christian's view of historical evidence (revelation), the Christian's view of the relationship between secular history and God's action,

and his practical attitude toward society and culture (social and personal ethics) are all aspects of one fundamental problem: the problem of Christianity and history.(1)

Now obviously, in regard to the relationship between the Christian understanding of history and other aspects of the Christian faith, it is not possible to stop where we have in the paragraph above. Professor John McIntyre has called for a Christian doctrine of history, and of this proposed doctrine he says: "But just because it is a Christian doctrine of history, it will be a doctrine which is in organic union with the whole corpus of the Christian faith."(2) "This doctrine would be a natural

(1) After making the above three-fold analysis of the problem of the relationship between Christianity and history, I discovered the following statement by Richard Niebuhr on the kingdom of God. In spite of a difference of terminology and context, it will be seen that Niebuhr's three-fold division corresponds to our own. "The Christian faith in the kingdom of God is a three-fold thing. Its first element is confidence in the divine sovereignty which, however hidden, is still the reality behind and in all realities. A second element is the conviction that in Jesus Christ the hidden kingdom was not only revealed in a convincing fashion but also began a special and new career among men, who had rebelled against the true law of their nature. The third element is the direction of life to the coming of the kingdom in power or to the redemption of the self-sufficient world." The Kingdom of God in America, p.88.

(2) McIntyre, John, The Christian Doctrine of History, Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, 1958, p.9. Italics McIntyre's.

and necessary corollary to the Christian doctrine of man...."[1]. This is so because the view we take of man's history and his relationship to God in history forms such a large part of our total assessment of man. And from here it is but a short step to the doctrines of Christ and God.

So it is that whatever we say about history must be in accord with the whole corpus of Christian doctrine; and any valid conclusions we reach about history must be taken account of in the remainder of that corpus. This is the background against which the following introductory statements should be placed.

2. The Proposed Treatment of the Problem.

The three central and highly interrelated contentions of this thesis are as follows. (It will be seen that these three contentions correspond, more or less, to the three problems which we have just discussed.)

(1) McIntyre, John, The Christian Doctrine of History, p.8.

First: God only reveals himself in history and through historically conditioned means; i.e., revelation is historically given and historically conditioned.

Secondly, and closely related to our first contention: In consequence of our first contention, the revelatory process and the process of critical historical investigation have more points in common than is generally recognized. It will be the main task of this thesis to demonstrate this contention through an examination of the "historical process" by which historians collect, examine, criticize and interpret historical data; and, secondly, by examining the "revelatory process" as it is presented in two contemporary theologians. This "historical process" and the "revelatory process" will then be compared. In this examination the philosophical historians to whom our attention will be directed are Giambattista Vico, Benedetto Croce and R.G. Collingwood; and the two contemporary theologians will be Rudolf Bultmann and Paul Tillich.

Thirdly: Revelation ("holy history") is positively related to the whole of history; and the latter is, in the last analysis, not superseded even in life everlasting. Implied in this is a radical affirmation of the permanent value of historical life and the products of

historical life; an affirmation carrying with it through-going consequences for social and personal ethics and the whole attitude of the Christian toward culture.

It will be helpful to expand these three central contentions before proceeding to our examination of the above mentioned philosophical historians and theologians.(1)

First then: God only reveals himself in history and through historically conditioned means; i.e. revelation is historically given and historically conditioned. The assumption of this statement is that God does reveal himself. This revelation is definitely testified to in the Old and New Testaments, and summarized in the Apostles Creed. (However, as we shall see, all revelation cannot be circumscribed within that which is recorded in the Old and New Testaments.)

It is stated in our first contention here that all revelation takes place in history. This is not to be understood, as it often is, in the superficial sense that history sets the stage (e.g. 1st Century Palestine) on to which revelation comes (e.g. Jesus as the Christ). Rather the more radical assertion is meant, that it is on the basis of an historical event that the knowledge and will of God is revealed to us. John Marsh says of this:-

(1) While all three of the historians whom we will examine were primarily interested in the philosophy and method of historical investigation, yet all three were practicing historians.

> ...redemption is not something which is added to creation, but is itself constitutive of the created, historical order. Nowhere has this received more forcible expression than in the opening prologue to St. John's Gospel, where the Word that ultimately "became flesh and dwelt among us" (John i. 14) is said to have been "in the beginning with God", and to have been the agency by which all creation came to be (John i.1-3). We might almost express this relationship of time to eternity in platonic terms and say for the Christian, as for Plato, the Eternal is never 'in the making', but that time, or history, is "being in the making', in the sense that history derives its significance and pattern from the eternal divine purpose with which it is endowed.(1)

There are a number of things said or implied in this statement which could become very hazardous were they followed out (especially beyond the limits of "holy history"), and which we will avoid here; e.g., the nature of the "eternal divine purpose" from which "history derives its significance", and the description of the "significance and pattern" in history which derives from the "eternal divine purpose". However it is not these potential difficulties which we are interested in, but rather the statement of the positive relationship between history and the Eternal. Elsewhere Marsh says of this relationship: "The order of knowing is certainly from the historical to the eternal..."(2), the history which is "being in the making", is, when lived out in obedience to God, the realization of the will——and hence the nature——of the Eternal.

(1) Marsh, John, The Fulness of Time, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1952. p.148. Cf. McIntyre, op.cit., pp.45-46.

(2) ibid., p.147.

In the course of The Fulness of Time, Marsh illustrates this position in terms of the "holy history" of the Old Testament. He shows how the Jews, through their understanding of the historical event of the Exodus, had revealed to them the will and nature of God. This historically based revelation led them to a new understanding of the Eternal; a new understanding of the Eternal which finds expression, among other ways, in the reformulated creation stories of Genesis 1. In like manner, and more obviously, the complex of events associated with Jesus of Nazareth reveals to us a new conception of God who is eternally Father, Son and Holy Spirit. "The order of knowing is certainly from the historical to the eternal." This means that revelation cannot be abstracted from its historical context without completely destroying the revelation. Revelation takes place in and through historical phenomena. When the invalid separation of (or abstraction of) revelation from history is attempted, it often takes the form of separating facts (historically given) from meaning or interpretation (divinely given). We will discuss at length the inadequacy of this separation, and we will maintain that fact and interpretation are an indissoluble whole.(1) Revelation takes place in and through historical phenomena.(2)

Our statement not only says that revelation takes place in

(1) Cf. Marsh, op.cit., pp. 13,162.

(2) Cf. Barth, Karl, Dogmatics in Outline, SCM Press, London, 1949, p. 69. Here is a different but very fine expression of the point of view being presented here.

history, but, following necessarily, through historically conditioned means. There is probably no Christian theologian who would not agree with this statement to some extent. However here, as in so much in this area, the task is to apply this principle consistently; to be wary of that point in theological discussion where the historically unconditioned slips unheralded into the historically conditioned.

What do we mean when we say that "the historically unconditioned slips unheralded into the historically conditioned"? The clearest explanation of this will be to give several examples. When we come to examine Calvin's understanding of Scripture we will see he maintains that (in their original form at least) the words of Scripture are literally the words of God himself. Here the historically conditioned words of Scripture (e.g. Isaiah's) become something beyond that which is historically conditioned and imperfect. The historically unconditioned has come to replace the historically conditioned; the eternal the temporal. Or again, when the Pope speaks ex cathedra on faith and morals the historically conditioned and imperfect words of a man and an historical tradition become infallible, i.e. free from error and the partiality of anything which is historically conditioned. Or yet again, when Barth discussed the Virgin Birth of the Christ[1] recorded in Matthew and Luke it is stated that not only are we to believe in the religious or theological signifi-

(1) Barth, op. cit., Ch. 14.

cance of these narratives (i.e. that Christ comes to us as a freely-given gift of God, and not as a gift which has been earned or initiated by man), but that we must understand these narratives as stating the biological conditions under which this birth took place. Once again that which is historically conditioned (the concrete circumstances of Christ's birth), and in this case reported in such a way as to leave the greatest doubts as to its character as literal fact, has become the literal and unconditioned expression of God's will.

In these three examples we have three ostensible historically conditioned events: the words of Isaiah; the words of the Pope; and the concrete historical circumstances of Christ's birth. Now we would not deny that in each case there is a greater or less expression of the Word of God. But it is quite another matter to say of any of these examples that they are to be accepted literally as an expression of the Word of God entirely free from historical conditioning and error. It makes no difference if we go on to say that it is "in faith" that we accept any or all of these examples as literal and unconditioned expressions of the Word of God. It makes no difference because it does not change their character as historical events which can never legitimately be absolved from standing beneath the light of ordinary historical criticism. (This does not imply that only historical criticism is to be brought to bear upon these events.)

On what basis does anyone say they should be absolved, and what purpose does it serve except that of obscurification? When the historically unconditioned grows up in the place of the historically conditioned (unheralded or not) counsel is darkened.

It might be objected that this same line of criticism could be directed against the statement "Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God". But a little thought will show that this is a very different sort of affirmation from that of our three examples. Let us use our example of Barth's treatment of the Virgin Birth. He affirms that in faith the Christian claims that Jesus of Nazareth was born of a virgin. This position is to be held in spite of anything of a critical nature which might be said against the literal acceptance of the Virgin Birth, e.g. the implausibility of the birth stories as a record of literal fact, or the lack of genuine evidence that human conception ever takes place in any other way than through the sexual union of man and woman. In effect, doctrinal belief about the Virgin Birth seals off that birth against historical or scientific criticism.

Now let us turn to our statement "Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God". As Christians we affirm in faith that Jesus is the Son of God. But this affirmation does not in any way seal off Jesus of Nazareth against criticism of a historical, scientific, psychological or any other nature. This affirmation

about Jesus of Nazareth, in contrast to our three examples, does not have a specific intellectual, moral or psychological content which may not be scrutinized. (Even less is it concerned with his physical constituency or mode of conception.) Accurate, cogent discussion of his anger and of his Jewish nationalism is perfectly acceptable; as is his pre-scientific world-view. Nor is the discussion of the degree to which Jesus conforms to various psychological types ruled out, although <u>on psychological grounds</u> the value of this endeavour is questionable. Jesus made no claims in these matters, and it is presumptious for us to make them for him.

In summary let us put it this way. Science and critical historical investigation are competent to judge the plausibility of a virgin birth, and to establish the marks of an historically conditioned and therefore imperfect narrative. (Notice that we do not say that it is competent to establish the marks of a statement which is either infallible or literally of divine origin. Just what the former is, is almost inconceivable; the latter utterly so). Yet Calvin and the theology of the Roman Catholic Church affirm that they can point to specific divine and infallible utterance[5]; and Barth maintains that he can point to a virgin birth. In these areas science and historical investigation are sealed off; knowledge is split. In contrast, no science is competent or even claims to be able

to judge the statement "Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God"; unless we wish to say that Christian theology is that "science". Nevertheless this statement is not sealed off from other disciplines; and history, hermeneutics and philosophy certainly have important contributions to make in evaluating this latter statement. Here knowledge is not split. In the former statements (our three examples) the historically unconditioned slips in to take the place of the historically conditioned; but in our latter statement this does not take place. We cannot even say that the historically conditioned is transformed into the historically unconditioned. Rather the historically conditioned and unconditioned are joined, but in such a way that the historically conditioned never ceases to be conditioned, and as such subject to scientific and historical criticism.

John Marsh, again in his insufficiently recognized book The Fulness of Time, is especially good on the biblical aspect of this question of the relationship between history and the Eternal. He states that the Hebrew conception of history was inextricably bound up with their belief that God acted in it, i.e., history was the means used by the Spirit of God to lead them to God. And how did they arrive at this concept of history?

> The Hebrews derived their concept of history from the only place whence any people can derive it, from history...(1)

(1) Marsh, op.cit., p.48.

they derived it

And especially, he says, from the history of their deliverance from Egypt. In other words, their access to God was through history and the historically conditioned; and ~~that~~ this historical mode of approach to God was itself arrived at historically.

But Marsh does not stop here. Later he goes on to assert that Jesus' "apparatus for experiencing events consisted substantially of the Old Testament"(1); and that passage after passage of the Old Testament enabled him to interpret each act of the tragedy in his own suffering, dying but victorious way."(2)

This needs to be put more explicitly. It was not "voices from heaven" understood in any literal sense which enabled Jesus, and later at second hand his disciples, to interpret his life. Rather it was the Old Testament record of God dealing with his people, God's revelation of himself in the Old Testament, which Jesus used with the help of the Holy Spirit in order to interpret his life. Here the Word of God (in the Old Testament) is joined with the Holy Spirit in the historical life of Jesus of Nazareth in order to bring forth the Word of God in a new and unique way: Jesus as the Christ. God's revelation of himself in the past is the pre-condition of, and becomes incorporated into (however transformed) the revelation of God in the person of Jesus the Christ. In this understanding God is done no dishonour; he is all in all. It is He who has given the revelation of himself

(1) ibid., p. 97.

(2) ibid., p.102.

in the Old Testament; it is He who has given to His Son the Holy Spirit enabling him to use the Old Testament to interpret his life; and it is God to whom this new revelation points. As for literal "voices from heaven", in what way do they protect the purity of doctrine and the honour of God? On what basis does anyone maintain that God wants or needs this "protection" and "honour"? What is "heavenly voice" literally understood? And what could be less historically conditioned than a "voice from heaven"? Ambiguity on this whole matter, even by such writers as John Marsh, leads to unnecessary obscurity. Has the time not arrived for theological discussion to leave behind the confusion and obscurity which ambiguity on this matter always entails; and to come down squarely and consistently on the side of historically given and conditioned revelation?

In the study which forms the body of this thesis we will further argue at length that both historical thinking and revelation are original activities of the human mind, i.e., that it is impossible to go behind them to a prior activity giving rise to them, or to answer the question as to how or when history or revelation began. History presupposes history; revelation presupposes revelation. To this is added our contention here: revelation is given historically, and is historically conditioned.

Our first contention leads directly to our second. It is: the revelatory process and the process of critical historical investigation have many more points in common than it is generally recognized.

We shall discuss this whole matter at length in the following chapters. However we may briefly characterize it here in the following way. History is the observing (directly and indirectly) of historical events in which they are critically evaluated, interpreted and organized. This process always takes place on the basis of previous historical knowledge. No one aspect of this process can be carried on in isolation from the others. It is "objective" if by that it is meant that the critical intelligence never relinquishes its function; but it is not "objective" in the sense of the still popular misconception that the historian is engaged in the unimaginative and uninvolved collection of facts.

Similarly the revelatory process (the process whereby we come to possess knowledge of God) is the observation of historical events (the Exodus, Jesus as the Christ), including their critical evaluation, interpretation and organization.(1) This takes place on the basis of previous historically given and conditioned revelation. As in the strict historical process, no one part is carried on in isolation from the whole process.

(1) The disciples prior to Easter and Whitsunday were engaged in this very process in all of its details, i.e. an involved observation of historical events which they evaluated, interpreted and organized on the basis of previous revelation. Their conclusions were consistently wrong. With Easter and Whitsunday the process remains the same but the conclusions are transformed because it has become necessary to take two new events into account - the Resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit. All previous events are now refocused. The parallel here with historical inquiry is obvious.

Further, the observer (direct and indirect, at first and at second hand) of the historical-revelatory event is imaginatively involved in that event, although not at the expense of his critical intelligence.

This is not to obscure the differences between the two processes; differences which we will discuss later. But it is to call attention to the far-reaching similarity between the two. It is because this similarity is usually obscured or ignored that the usual statement of the differences is so unsatisfactory.

The third and final contention which we will explore in the course of this thesis is: Revelation ("holy history") is positively related to history as a whole, and the value of history as a whole is not abrogated even in life everlasting. Implied in this is a radical affirmation of the permanent value of historical life; an affirmation carrying with it thoroughgoing consequences for social and personal ethics and the whole attitude of the Christian toward culture.

A concept which we will implicitly and explicitly be returning to many times in our discussion is that of "holy history" (Heilsgeschichte).(1)

(1) "Holy history" is frequently referred to by the German term Heilsgeschichte. The German terms is more precise as it only means "history" in the sense of "historical event", and not in the sense of "history" as "scientific study". The English word "history" includes both meanings. However, since the sense of the English word "history" is almost always defined by the context in which it is used, we will confine ourselves here to the term "holy history".

What is meant by "holy history" is clear enough. It is "the recitation of the events that constitute the economy of salvation"(1); or, the "rehearsal of the mighty acts by which God has accomplished the redemption of his creatures"(2). More simply, it is the record of God's dealings with man which is recorded in the Old and New Testaments, and which is in major part rehearsed annually (partly by implication) in the Church Year.

This is clear enough. However, it is when we come to consider the relationship between this "holy history" and history as a whole that we encounter a most difficult problem.

> In fact, one of the major problems which we shall have to face is how what is called Heilgeschichte is related to ordinary history——and whether it forms a separate continuous line in distinction from the latter; whether it is, on the contrary, interwoven with the latter; and finally, if it is so, how we are to describe those portions of ordinary history which coincide with Heilsgeschichte. (3)

The position which we will be maintaining in this thesis is that "holy history" is positively related to history as a whole. As we have affirmed before, more is meant by this than the fact that revelation takes place in an historical context ("under Pontius Pilate"). Beyond this it is meant that "holy history" and secular history cannot be separated into a distillate of "holy history" (or "acts of God", "teachings of Jesus" etc.) leaving for a residue the dross which constitutes the

(1) McIntyre, op.cit., p.8.

(2) ibid., p.8.

(3) ibid., pp.8-9.

remainder of history. They cannot be separated because not only is the order of knowing from the historical to the eternal, but also because our knowledge of the eternal never ceases to be historical. The events of the Exodus are as much a part of our knowledge of God as are the Ten Commandments (themselves profoundly historically conditioned). In like manner our knowledge of God is not any body of kerygma and didache which can be abstracted from the New Testament; but it is that record itself with its kerygma and didache. The historical record itself is never superceded by a superior position, even if it is one which has been abstracted from the historical record.

This record is shot through with obscurity and ambiguity, as is all history. This is because it is made up of a large number of historically conditioned elements; it is seen "through a glass darkly", not "face to face"; not with the "eyes of God". Of course in one very real way the obscurity and ambiguity of the Biblical record is finally and decisively clarified by the events of Easter and Pentecost. That is our "certainty". But for many this is not enough. For many there must also be "voices from heaven". With this there is usually an accompanying de-emphasis, in one degree of another, of the tension, temptation and indecision which Jesus faced (beginning with his baptism and reaching a climax in Gethsemane) as he struggled to understand God's will for his life. This de-emphasis is not only(only!) a falsification of

the Biblical record, but it is also intimately related to an all too common view of the life of the Christian within the Church which is singularly free from the awareness of the tension and struggle which is necessarily a part of the historical existence of the Christian as he endeavours to understand the will of God for him in his historical situation. No one can stand in Gethsemane again; the Christ has done that once and for all. But the deliverance which the Christ has wrought for us does not include a deliverance from the necessity of standing in our own historical situation (which is so ambiguous theologically, politically and socially), taking upon ourselves the tension, temptation and indecision which such a position entails, and seeking God's help that his will may be done in our lives. And indeed, in this situation, there may well be "voices from heaven"; but not the kind that can be tape recorded.

This means, concretely, to take only one of many possible examples, that the efforts of such men as Rudolf Bultmann to understand anew God's will for our lives can be legitimately accepted or rejected only after the situation to which he speaks and the answers which he gives have entered deeply into our hearts and minds. But what do we find so often? As we read those men who stand in seeming oblivion of the serious difficulties of contemporary theological communication, we find clichés about Existentialism; guilt by association with Heidegger;

and six reasons why Bultmann's theology is not as adequate as Scholasticism. There is often truth to be found as such accusations as these are developed, but one senses very little deep awareness of the problem to which Bultmann speaks.

No, they will have none of this. The genuine recognition that our treasure is in earthen, historically conditioned vessels is not for them; nor is the anxiety which goes with it. They will have "voices from heaven". If the Christ has not delivered them from the necessity of taking this situation upon themselves (he has only (!) sent the Holy Spirit to help them), then they will remedy this defect. This attempt is made apparently on the basis of the conviction that the disciple must be greater than the master. But the master is shown to be truly master in that he could tolerate the tension and ambiguity of historical existence and knowledge which these disciples refuse to contemplate.

Marsh, in the book already cited, states in different words the relationship between history and the eternal which we have been pointing toward here.

> The first thing to note is that, though the eternal is not to be identified in any way with the world of time and succession [which would be as static or non-dialectical as the separation of the two], it is related to it very definitely and positively...it is only in and through the things of time and sense, by an act of faith committing the whole being in decision with the historical order itself, that he can know and have normative experience of the eternal.(1)

A few pages later Marsh develops, in a passage already quoted in

(1) Marsh, op.cit., p. 145.

another connection, this understanding of the relationship between time or history and the eternal in the following way:-

> We might even express this relationship of time to eternity in platonic terms and say that for the Christian, as for Plato, the Eternal is never 'in the making', but that time, or history, is 'being in the making', in the sense that history derives its significance and pattern from the eternal divine purpose with which it is endowed. (1) (2)

It is the phrase "time, or history, is being in the making" which we would especially want to call attention to. This idea will appear frequently in the following chapters; especially when we come to our examination of Croce. Here we would only emphasize that all we know of the eternal has been "made" in history, and is inseparable from that history; that man as "the image of God" is not only created in history, but that he developes and becomes aware of this image only in the course of history. (The understanding, consistently applied, is a fruitful one for helping to comprehend the changes in the Christ's actions and words between his baptism and his death). History is the glass through which we see darkly, and nothing in our experience transcends that vision. However, Paul's image here is not an entirely happy one, for the vision which we will have "face to face" implies that the dark glass of historical existence is entirely done away with. This is not so.

(1) ibid., p.148.

(2) In accepting this statement it is assumed that Marsh would be very cautious about deriving the "significance and pattern" of history from the divine purpose. For many specific historic events the divine purpose remains thoroughly obscure.

> For since the end has itself entered into history, history can now no longer be discarded at the end: it cannot cease and give place to something else, but must absorb history into itself. (1)

And elsewhere:

> There are clues, but certainly no 'blue prints' of the heavenly society. We know that we shall not live in oblivion of history and what has taken place in it. (2)

Perhaps even this relatively modest statement may appear as something of a 'blue print'. It cannot be claimed that it is devoid of the element of speculation. However our human nature constrains us to say something about the heavenly society, and certainly we can say as much as Marsh has said here. His position which seems to be largely identical with the one which we have been developing throughout this introduction, is a clear correlary of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. Moreover, to say any less is to reduce history to a meaningless shadow play, to reduce our conception of God to something akin to that of Voltaire, and to invite irresponsibility toward historical possibilities. At least the seeds of just this situation are found within a strictly futurist eschatology with its failure to properly evaluate the historical, viz., a denial of the resurrection of the body, a demonization of God, and an invitation to historical-social irresponsibility. And finally, as Marsh points

(1) Marsh, op.cit., p. 169.

(2) ibid., p.151.

out at length in his book, any such separation of history and eternity is foreign to both the Old and New Testaments.

If the theology of the Church has sometimes forgotten or obscured this situation, the worship of the Church and especially the Holy Communion has stood as a reminder (admittedly often ignored) that sacred and secular are not separate. In the Holy Communion the sacred enters into history, influencing it and being influenced by it. Revelation is positively related to secular history, and the value of secular history is not abrogated even in life everlasting.

3. Some Past Treatments of the Problem.

As a further introduction to this study it will be helpful to look at the way in which the Old and New Testaments and various representative Christian writers have dealt with the problem of the relationship between the Christian (or Jewish) faith and history. In making this brief examination we will be following the three-part division of the subject which we outlined at the beginning of this introduction: (1) the attitude toward God's action in history; (2) the interpretation of scripture; (3) the understanding of the relationship between Christianity and the whole of history, and including one's attitude toward contemporary culture and society.

It is the first two of these three divisions which are the most relevant to the concern of this thesis; yet, as we shall see, it is this part of the problems which has received the

least attention. The various attitudes which in the past have been taken toward the historical evidence upon which Christianity is based are not satisfactory for the contemporary Christian. Why are they not satisfactory? It will be one of the indirect aims of this thesis to throw some light on this situation. However, at this point, we can make the following highly simplified statement. The attitudes which have been taken in the past are not satisfactory because the problem of the critical use of historical evidence was never raised——for all practical purposes ——until the beginning of the 19th Century. And in fact, it could not be raised apart from two other interrelated phenomena of the past century: critical historiography and biblical criticism.

As a result of this relatively recent development we have a situation in which a whole new area of experience and thought presents itself for integration into the Christian faith. This is a challenge which has been taken up and focused first in biblical criticism and then, later, in the demythologization controversy. Of course, like any challenge, it has brought forth the usual quota of rigid, negative reactions.

In an examination of any of the standard works on the history of Christian doctrine we find a long development of thought concerning the doctrine of God, the Christ, the Church etc.; a development which cannot be ignored by those doing contemporary

work in these areas. But what does one find concerning the mind of the early Church as regards history, historical interpretation and the closely allied subject of revelation? There is a discussion of the establishment of the Canon, of the tension between Scripture and tradition, the use of allegory for the interpretation of Scripture——and little else. There is little help here for the Christian searching for answers to the problems which have been raised by the development of critical history, biblical criticism, the relationship between "holy" and secular history etc. It is against this background that Professor John McIntyre has called for a Christian doctrine of history(1), and Paul Tillich speaks of far-reaching restatements of traditional doctrines (e.g. Christology) as a result of a Christian interpretation of history.(2)

With this general statement we turn now to see what the Old Testament and previous Christian writers have had to say upon this subject.

The Old Testament. Our previous discussion has touched upon the Hebrew conception of the relationship between God and history. It now remains to state their attitude on each of the three levels which we distinguished in the first part of this introduction.

(1) McIntyre, op.cit., Ch.1.

(2) Tillich, Paul, The Interpretation of History, p.261.

God's action in history. In the Old Testament we have what is perhaps the pre-eminent expression of the conviction that God acts in history, and in this action reveals himself and his will for his people. The entire complex of events which make up the Exodus form the foundation of the Old Testament, and echoes of this are found throughout the Hebrew Bible (and to a lesser extent, of course, in the New Testament too). The Hebrew conception of history was inextricably bound up with the belief that God acted in it.

> As with the historians, so with the prophets of the pre-exilic period. Amos, Micah, Hosea, Isaiah and Jeremiah all take the deliverance from Egypt as the point where God acted in history to make Israel his people, and as the event which laid upon them obligations of loyalty and obedience which could not be neglected or ignored without disaster. (1)

This aspect of the Hebrew attitude to history is too obvious to require further emphasis.

Interpretation of Scripture. It is when we turn to our second level, the attitude toward historical evidence, that we encounter a radically different mental outlook. It is, of course, precritical; there is no judging and weighing of the historical record. (A critical evaluation, in some form, would have had to have gone on when the record was in an oral form; but of this we have no record.) But beyond this there is seen the willingness to take non-historical myths (e.g. the Babylonian creation myth)

(1) Marsh, op.cit., p.44. This section on the Old Testament is heavily indebted to Marsh's book which gives a full discussion with Biblical references of that which is presented here in summary fashion.

and pastoral or agricultural feasts (e.g. the feast of unleavened bread) and rework them in order that they might become the vehicle and symbolic expression of the essentially historical drama which we find in the Old Testament.[1] To our literalistic, post-scientific minds this is a most perplexing phenomenon. We can scarcely comprehend the attitude which made such a procedure acceptable. It does, as Marsh points out, testify to a remarkably developed sense of the historical and its importance; but in a form which is alien to the contemporary Christian. Indeed, our asking the question of the Hebrew attitude toward historical evidence is anachronistic; they would never have been capable of speaking of the matter in any such terms. However, our question is a necessary anachronism as we try to grapple with this problem Judaism and history. The third level, the attitude toward secular history and culture, is hardly less anachronistic when applied to the Old Testament; although the answer implicit in it is both comprehensible and much more satisfactory. We say this because the preponderant weight of the Old Testament is against any radical division between sacred and secular. True, there is the "chosen people" and there are the gentiles. But all is under the sovereignty of God. If the Hebrews prosper, that is God's doing. If they are chastised by the gentiles, that too is God's doing. Commenting on the Book of Jonah, Marsh

(1) Cf. Marsh, op.cit., Ch. 3.

says of its intention:-

> The divine pity...is constitutive not only of salvation history but of secular history as well. The divine purposes of redemption are universal in their scope. (1)

Of the view which fragments life into contemplative and active, spiritual and material, sacred and secular, church and culture; the Old Testament is refreshingly free. This observation is obvious enough; yet how much theological writing and, even more, conversation (here we are not so painstakingly orthodox) proceeds in oblivion of this "obvious" observation!

The New Testament. God's action in history. In the New Testament it is in St. Paul that we have the closest approximation to any self-conscious reflection about history. Concerning our first level, God's action in history, Paul was at pains to emphasize that in Christ God had acted in history; that this was no angelic visitation, but solidly within the stream of human life and history. Further he says that God had prepared for this event in the Jewish nation, and that in the fulness of time he had brought his plan to completion in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Interpretation of Scripture. On our second level, the attitude toward historical evidence, and including the interpretation of Scripture (the Old Testament), we do not have a uniform picture in the New Testament. This is what we would naturally expect due to the diverse origins of the writings

(1) Marsh, op.cit., p.111.

included within it. On the one hand there are instances of complete literalism, as in Matthew's introduction of a second donkey into his account of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem in order to exhibit an exact correspondence with Zech.ix.9.(1) On the other hand we see attempts to break away from literalism, as in Paul's treatment of the resurrection of the body in I Cor. xv.

The problem of the interpretation of historical evidence was, for the New Testament writers, the problem of the interpretation of the Old Testament in its relationship to Jesus Christ. What God had done in the person of Jesus of Nazareth was "according to the Scriptures", i.e. it had been planned by God and foretold in the Old Testament. "Thus the Church was committed, by the very terms of its kerygma, to a formidable task of biblical research, primarily for the purpose of clarifying its own understanding of the momentous events out of which it had emerged..."(2)

C.H. Dodd, in his book According to the Scriptures, argues that this task of Biblical research was carried on in the following way. First, there was "a certain method of biblical study". This method was not, as is often thought, to use a collection of isolated "proof texts"; these collections being a later development. Secondly, the New Testament writers used a large selection of Old Testament passages, especially from

(1) Dodd, C.H., According to the Scriptures, Nisbet & Co. Ltd., London, 1952, p.127.

(2) ibid, p.14.

Isaiah, Jeremiah, the Psalms and certain minor prophets. "These sections were understood as wholes, and particular verses or sentences were quoted from them rather as pointers to the whole context than as constituting testimonies in and for themselves."(1) Thirdly; "The relevant scriptures were understood and interpreted upon intelligible and consistent principles as setting forth 'the determinate counsel of God' which was fulfilled in the gospel facts, and consequently as fixing the meaning of those facts."(2) Dodd further says that the whole body of material resulting from this method provides the starting point and chief regulative ideas of the theology of Paul, the author of Hebrews and the Fourth Evangelist.(3) The content of these "chief regulative ideas" is, as C.K. Barrett points out in an independant discussion of this same problem, made up of "two primary features: the kingdom of God, and the person of Jesus as the Son of man"(4).

On this basis Dodd rejects the idea that the New Testament writers look upon the Old Testament as pious fortune telling or a collection of "proof texts"; although admitting, of course, that there are instances of both. This does not mean that the Old Testament ideas were transferred intact into the New Testament. Rather they were transferred into their new context with

(1) Dodd, op.cit., p.126. Italics Dodd's.
(2) ibid., pp.126-127.
(3) ibid., p.127.
(4) Barrett, C.K., "Yesterday, Today and For Ever", Inaugural lecture of the Professor of Divinity, published by the University of Durham, Durham, 1959. p.9.

"a certain shift, nearly always an expansion, of the original scope of the passage."(1) (This, of course, must be done carefully; and each instance must be judged on its own merits.) Thus, to take just one example:-

> Christology, it is not too much to say, is rooted in the understanding of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus in the light of the [Old Testament] ideas of Son of Man and Servant. (2) (3)

As C.K. Barrett says, "...the historical tradition was from the beginning combined with and used in the interests of the conviction 'Jesus is Lord'"(4).

That which emerges from the New Testament transformation of the Old Testament material is something new, yet it is based upon the same understanding of history as that possessed by the Old Testament writers themselves. This understanding of history Dodd characterizes as follows:-

> History, upon this view, or any rate the history of the people of God, is built upon a certain pattern corresponding to God's design for man His creature. It is a pattern, not in the sense of a pre-ordained sequence of inevitable events, but in the sense of a kind of master-plan imposed upon the order of human life in this world by the Creator Himself, a plan which man is not at liberty to alter, but within which his freedom works. It is this pattern, disclosed "in divers parts and divers manners" in the past history of Israel, that the New Testament writers conceive to have been brought into full light in the events of the gospel story, which they interpret accordingly. (5)

(1) Dodd, op. cit., p.130.

(2) ibid., p.119.

(3) Here again we see the relationship between the problem of history and that of Christology.

(4) Barrett, C.K., op.cit., p.7.

(5) Dodd, op.cit., p.128.

Thus, in spite of certain instances of the use of "proof texts", and in spite of the lack of any critical attitude toward the historical basis of the Old Testament such as we will find when we turn to Origen, there is in the New Testament a creative and disciplined effort to relate the Old Testament to the event of Jesus the Christ.

Christianity and history. In turning to examine the New Testament attitude toward cultural or historical life, we will confine ourselves to St. Paul. We do this because it is only St. Paul who provides us with sufficient material to make an evaluation in this area.

In a long, very careful and more comprehensive consideration of Paul's attitude to culture than we are attempting here, H. Richard Niebuhr characterizes Paul's position as "Christ and culture in paradox".(1) On the one hand Paul emphatically affirms that God has entered into history. "The new life, moreover, was not simply a promise and a hope but a present reality, evident in the ability of men to call upon God as their Father and to bring forth fruits of the spirit of Christ within them and their community."(2) Therefore, since this new life is a present historical reality, there could be no question of a radical denial of the value of cultural life. On the other hand the revelation in Jesus Christ had placed all men and all cultural activity on the same level, namely, that of a sinful humanity before the wrath of God.

(1) Niebuhr, op. cit., Ch.5.
(2) ibid., p.166.

The net result which came out of this tension was to assign to culture (in its broadest sense) a negative function; its function was "to prevent sin from becoming as destructive as it might otherwise be, rather than to further the attainment of positive good."(1) As it is obvious from the Pauline literature, practices of the surrounding culture such as slavery were taken for granted. It was only when such practices were destructive of the individual Christian's faith and morals that they were vigorously opposed. Such a position conceivably would have been adequate for a relatively short interim between the first and second comings; but over the course of the centuries it has often supplied a basis for the rationalization of political and cultural conservatism.

Paul's concern in regard to history itself is in line with his general position. History presented no problem to him except insofar as it had to do specifically with the coming of the Christ.(2) Thus it is that Paul in Romans 3:1ff. has an extended discussion of the problem presented by the fact that the Hebrew people, who had been prepared through a long course of history to receive the Christ, had in fact not done so. Concerning history as a whole he is silent; and this stands in strong contrast to the statements of great importance which he has to make up on so many aspects of the Christian faith.

(1) Niebuhr, op.cit. p.169.
(2) Cf. Barrett, op.cit., pp. 7-9, 11,20 et passim.

The explanation of this is close at hand; the situation of the early Church was such that the problem of the relationship between faith and history was not visible.

Origen. God's action in history. In Origen (approximately 185-255 A.D.) we have a full-blown manifestation of strongly Hellenistic, non-historical presuppositions being brought to bear upon Christian revelation; a point of view which has never ceased to plague the Church. As we have said before, the decision one makes in regard to our first level (i.e. whether or not God's revelation of himself takes place in and through history) has thoroughgoing consequences which reach out into every area of Christian life and thought. And it is just this matter of the significance of history which is "The critical subject upon which Origen never accepted the biblical viewpoint..."(1) Behind this rejection of the significance of history is Origen's characteristic Platonic aversion to particularity.

Interpretation of Scripture. According to R.P.C. Hanson, "Origen is the first father of the Church whose interpretation of Scripture we can survey and judge fully."(2) Arising out of a time of comparative literacy, and one in which Christians were well acquainted with the Bible, Origen set aside the crude employment of proof texts "in favour of a carefully compiled commentary, equipped with a suitable apparatus of learning."(3) The result

(1) Hanson, R.P.C., Allegory and Event, SCM Press Ltd., London, 1959, p.363.

(2) Hanson, op.cit., p.359.

(3) For the great importance of Scripture in Origen's whole theology see Molland, Einar, The Conception of the Gospel in the Alexandrian Theology, I Kommisjon Hos Jacob Dybwad, Oslo, 1938, pp.85-94 et passim.

of this new approach to Scripture was a very mixed one. On the one hand he had an oracular view of the Bible, together with the attendant conception of inspiration and inerrancy which go with that view. He spiritualised the Biblical record, making an extensive use of allegory to this end.(1) All of these characteristics, which are alien to our contemporary exegesis, he derived from Philo. Commenting upon this Hanson says:

> We can therefore reasonably claim that the particular parts of Origen's interpretation of Scripture which are irreconcilable with the assumptions of the scholars of today derive largely (but not solely) from sources extraneous to traditional Christianity, from a Platonic attitude to history and a Philonic attitude to Holy Scripture. (2)

Yet, on the other hand, Origen did abandon the use of crude proof texts and the acceptance at face value of much of the Bible. (His Platonic leanings demanded as much). In this endeavour allegory was again a useful instrument. Some of the results of this approach have a most contemporary ring. "Not Rudolph Bultmann himself could be more anxious than Origen was to extricate essential Christian dogma from the belief in the three-storeyed universe, or from a literal interpretation of eschatalogical imagery."(3) And "Origen's agile mind conceived, or at least

(1) Cf. Molland, op.cit., pp.136-144 et passim. "To translate the bodily Gospel into a spiritual Gospel is the purpose of Origen's exegesis".

(2) Hanson, op.cit., p.368. Cf. Molland, op.cit., pp.85ff. Molland points out that despite Origen's indebtedness to Greek thought, he places a very limited value upon its achievements. He rejects the idea that any significant knowledge of God can be attained through philosophy or "general revelation".

(3) Hanson, op.cit., p.366. Cf. Molland, op.cit., pp.144ff.

developed and elaborated, the conception of the Bible as a record of God's gradual revelation of himself to men".(1) (2) Concerning the story of Adam and Eve (and other similar examples could be cited) there is strong evidence that Origen did not see it as historical at all.(3)

In short, Origen's Platonic and Philonic presuppositions forced him to abandon a literal acceptance of Scripture, and to assume a critical and evaluative attitude. The results were sometimes fruitful, but because his presuppositions were anti-historical in nature much of what he had to say was totally alien to the spirit of the Scriptures which he endeavoured to interpret.

Christianity and history. When we come to the matter of attitude toward culture, we do not have any explicit consideration of this subject by Origen to which we can turn. The absence of any such material is in itself significant. Beyond this negative evidence, it is easy to infer Origen's attitude to culture from statements he makes in other contexts. For example, Daniélou offers this estimate of a crucial passage in Origen's Commentary on the Song of Songs.

(1) Hanson, op.cit., p.367.

(2) G.L. Prestige minimizes this aspect of Origen's work. See: Prestige, G.L. Fathers and Heretics, SPCK, London, 1954, p.55. Cf. Molland, op.cit., pp.145ff.

(3) Hanson, op.cit., p.269ff.

> What it amounts to is, in fact, an account of the three ways [of spiritual life], the purgative, the illuminative and the unitive. We may take special note of what Origen says about the second of these, as it is particularly interesting. The essential operation of the illuminative way is the formation of a true estimate of things: the soul must come to realize the nothingness of temporal things and learn to understand that the spiritual world alone is real.(1)

The whole of Origen's mystical theology is in this spirit; namely, a theology which is "more towards intellectual contemplation than towards the experimental awareness of the presence of God and the transfiguration of the soul by love,..."(2) Ecstasy and the "vision of God", rather than any throughgoing concern for the "Kingdom of God", are the characteristic notes of Origen's theology.

However, there was one area of culture, and we might expect this from what we have said before, about which Origen was concerned. This was the intellectual and contemplative heritage of Hellenic culture. And although he placed only a limited value upon the results of this heritage, yet one of the chief motivations in Origen's Biblical exposition was his desire to make the Bible intelligible to his contemporaries who had been educated in this tradition. Whatever his excesses, he cannot but be admired for the competent execution of this desire.

(1) Daniélou, Jean, Origen, Sheed and Ward, London, 1955, p.305. The value of Daniélou's evaluation is strengthened by its sympathetic appraisal of Origen's work.

(2) ibid., p.302.

In the chapter on Origen in Fathers and Heretics, G.L. Prestige, who curiously hints at but never explicitly mentions Origen's totally inadequate evaluation of the importance of history in Scripture, has this to say:

> [The Platonically and Philonically inspired] allegorical method "saved the Scriptures for the Church"... [enabling] both Testaments to be defended against the destructive criticism of educated Hellenists. And by saving the Bible, it gave security to the historical foundation of the Christian faith and permanence to the evangelical standard of Christian values. (1)

Theology does indeed make strange bedfellows! A thoroughly antihistorical exegesis saving the historical foundation of the Christian Church. And yet Prestige's point can quite plausibly be argued.

Prestige elaborates upon our debt to Origen in this matter, saying:-

> The Church owes it to Origen, first and foremost, that, whenever Christianity is true to itself, it is a rational faith. The whole educated world is in his debt for the preservation of the old Hellenic intellectual culture, which he transformed by his genius into the beginnings of a philosophia perennis for Christendom. (2)

This would seem to be an accurate estimate of Origen's contribution to Christian philosophy. However, it is also a decidedly one-sided estimate. Origen's transformation of the "Hellenic intellectual culture" left certain important aspects virtually

(1) Prestige, op.cit., p.59.
(2) ibid., p.64. Cf. Molland, op.cit., pp. 152ff.

unchanged; principally the non-historical outlook of that culture and the attendant belief that "the spiritual world alone is real". It is impossible to reconcile this with the Biblical point of view. If Origen is to have credit for this perennial philosophy of Christendom, then perhaps he should also have a share of the credit for the perennial plague of Christendom; namely, the non-historical "spiritual" bias which finds its most popular contemporary expression in terms of "eternal truths" and "the teachings of Jesus" (outmoded in the theologian's study but still regnant in pub and pew).

St. Augustine. We turn now to the 5th Century and St. Augustine; a name synonymous with the Christian interest in history. This subtle and prolific writer deals with history at all three of the levels which we have been discussing. Augustine's ideas about God's action in history and the relationship between Christianity and history (our first and third levels) have of course been the subject of much theological discussion through the centuries. However, Augustine also had much to say about the interpretation of Scripture; ideas which were creative and significant in the historical context in which they arose, and which cannot be ignored even today. This aspect of Augustine's work has received surprisingly little systematic attention.(1)

(1) Cf. Cochrane, C.N., Christianity and Classical Culture, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1940. pp.474-478. These five suggestive pages are the longest explicit discussion of Augustine's treatment of Scripture available in English.

God's action in history. Augustine emphasizes not only that God acts in that portion of history which is recorded in the Old and New Testaments, but also in history in its entirety. "The all-high and true God with His Word and Holy Spirit ... (is the creator and maker of all spirit and all body..." (1) Moreover, this action of God is not a static, once-upon-a-time act; rather it is dynamic and continuing. It is God

> ...from whom are the potentialities of things yet to be realized, the realization of things once only potential, and the motion or development which enables what is potential to become real and what is real to create other potentiality....(This being the nature of the Christian God) it is beyond belief that such a God wished the kingdoms of men, their lordships and their servitudes, to be outside the laws of his Providence. (1)

In this quotation Augustine is pointing out something we have called attention to earlier in this Introduction; namely that one's understanding of God is intimately related to the view one takes of history and man in history. One of the recurring contentions of the City of God is that the pagans' false conception of God led them into a distorted apprehension of the nature of man and of history.

Interpretation of Scripture. Turning to Augustine's interpretation of Scripture we find that he avoids Origen's Platonically inspired allegorizing(2), but at the same time

(1) De Civ. Dei, v.11. Translation by R.H. Barrow, Introduction to St. Augustine, Faber and Faber Ltd., London, 1950, pp.46-48. For a longer and more comprehensive commentary on this passage see Barrow, op.cit., pp. 158-162 et passim.

(2) Retractationes ii.24.1. Augustine is also cautious about speculation concerning the Second Coming. See: De Civ. Dei, xviii, 53, xx. 30.

he is not content with literalism. For example, the Creation is to be understood as taking place "in some other way" than within the six days defined by the circuit of the sun.(1) Augustine distinguishes, for example in the first part of The Spirit and the Letter, between the literal and figurative meaning of Scripture.

> That text——"The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life"——is naturally taken to mean that we are not to understand the figurative sayings of Scripture in their literal sense, which may be irrational, but to look for their deeper significance...(2)

This passage demonstrates that Augustine, far from being a literalist, sees the difficulties presented by Scripture on a relatively superficial, verbal level. Beyond this, moreover, he understands that there are deeper difficulties in interpretation; as for example the difficulties presented in The Spirit and the Letter when he discusses Paul's concepts of law, grace and justification.(3) At other places this same discernment of the difficulty in Biblical exegesis is seen as Augustine tries to reconcile the Old and New Testaments.(4)

Against this generally favourable estimate of Augustine's use of Scripture, an estimate which we do not wish to retract, there must be placed certain exceptions and qualifications. For example, in The First Homily on I John Augustine comments on

(1) De Gen. ad Litt., iii. 26. Cited by Christian, W.A., "The Creation of the World" in A Companion to the Study of St. Augustine, Oxford University Press, New York, 1955, p.319.

(2) "The Library of Christian Classics", Augustine: Later Works, edited by J. Burnaby, SCM Press Ltd., London, 1955. p.198.

(3) ibid., pp.227ff.

(4) De Util. Cred., iv. 12; vi. 13 et passim.

Isaiah's words "He put a band upon my head as on a bridegroom, and adorned me as a bride with her ornaments."(1); saying baldly that here Isaiah "speaks in Christ's person". Or again, Augustine seems to regard Christ's remark about the camel passing through the eye of the needle not as an example of oriental hyperbola, but as something which is literally possible with God's help (although admitting it has never taken place). Or yet again, it is inconceivable that "The Song of Songs" was ever intended to be a straightforward love song. Many other such instances could be cited, and yet compared with the strengths of Augustine's approach to Scripture they are relatively insignificant flaws.

Another weakness of Augustine's interpretation of Scripture, and one of a different order from that just discussed, is his imperfect conception of the nature of historical knowledge.

> Suppose someone thinks he knows the [historical] fact I have just mentioned about Cicero. Nothing prevents him from learning it, though it cannot be a matter of knowledge strictly speaking. But if he does not know the difference between true knowledge, i.e., rational knowledge, and belief in what has been profitably handed down to posterity either by report or in writing [i.e., historical knowledge] , he certainly errs, and there is not error without disgrace. Our knowledge, therefore, we owe to reason; our beliefs to authority... Knowledge always implies belief...But belief does not always imply knowledge...(2)

The passage goes on to explain why the acceptance of Christian belief upon the basis of authority is to be commended.

(1) Isa. 61:10.

(2) De Util. Cred., xi. 25. Quoted in: "The Library of Christian Classics", Augustine: Earlier Writings, edited by John H.S. Burleigh, SCM Press Ltd., London, 1951. p. 312.

Augustine's estimate of history here is perfectly applicable to that form of "history" known as chronology——the only form of formal history with which Augustine could have been familiar. But it is not applicable to genuine, critical history which partakes fully in what he describes as "reason". However as it is only within the last century that the Church has become self-consciously aware of what is involved in this matter, it would be anachronistic to take Augustine to task here. Nevertheless, the Church's handling of the New Testament, at least, has frequently been marked more by the spirit of critical, reasoned history than it has by the spirit of chronology.(1) In view of the dominance of the spirit of chronology in historical writing (i.e. history conceived more or less as a listing of dates and events) virtually until the 19th Century, this manifestation of a critical and reasoned attitude toward the New Testament is a most interesting and important fact, and one which, although outside the scope of this thesis, is worthy of investigation.

Turning once again to the strengths of Augustine's approach to Scripture, attention should be called to his realization that the principles useful for the study of literature in general ("general hermeneutics" as we will sometimes refer to them in the following chapters) are partially applicable to the study of Scripture.(2) The help to be derived from general hermeneu-

(1) For a full definition of "critical history" and "chronology" see Part II of this thesis; especially the sections on Croce and Collingwood.

(2) De Util. Cred., iv. 10; v. 11-13.

tics lies in its ability to guide us in such formal matters as deciding whether or not an author wishes us to understand his words literally, and the permissibility of seeing implications in a text which the author himself did not see.

However, for the final judgment of the value of Scripture, Augustine maintains, we must depend upon the Christian expositor who has immersed himself in Scripture and who speaks from the standpoint of one who believes in that which he is setting forth. (Although, in this too, there is a parallel with general hermeneutics. For example, we would not turn to an avowed anti-Aristotelian to learn of the truth and value of Aristotle.(1)) This Christian expositor, immersed in Scripture and speaking from the standpoint of faith, is characterized above all by "Christian wisdom" (sapientia). R.H. Barrow states Augustine's position here in the following words:

> In Scripture is to be found a record of the dealings of God with one nation, and in the record is a guide to the interpretation of history; in the Incarnation is the answer to man's most searching questions about the meaning of existence. Faith is rewarded by "insight" (sapientia). Starting from this new point of departure, namely, Christian insight into values, man has now a clue through the tangles of accumulated learning (scientia). The facts composing that learning are still of importance, but the old self-contradictory and fragmentary interpretations of them, and the systems erected upon those interpretations, will be discarded. Secular learning must be used, and used for the interpretation of Scripture; but the motive of its use will be different. The accumulated data of knowledge will be re-arranged in the light of the new principle of interpretation, and by being seen in a new light will take on a new meaning. Reason is to

(1) Cf. De Util. Cred., vi.13.

> be as powerful and active as before; but it has to take into account as one of its basic principles something of which it was unaware of before, namely, the insight into the meaning of existence given by an initial act of faith; and faith means taking God at His word as the source of all values.(1)

The fundamental query we have here is whether or not the initial act of faith is made as independently of the accumulated data of knowledge (scientia) and, specifically, reasonable historical knowledge, as Augustine imagines. But be that as it may, the above quotation expresses the fundamental basis of Augustine's interpretation of Scripture.

Christianity and History. It is when we turn to our third level (that concerning the relationship between Christianity and history, and including "philosophy of history") that we reach the area where St. Augustine put his decisive stamp upon Christian thought; an impression which continues to this day in both Christian and secular versions. Motivated by practical, apologetic interests Augustine opposed the Greek conception of the eternal world, without beginning or end, in which History traverses an ever recurring cycle of events demonstrating the regular, rational and dependable order of the universe. Augustine does this by asserting that the cyclical view of history is hostile to the Christian faith, which proclaims a radical newness which has come into the world in the person of Jesus the Christ.

(1) Barrow, op.cit. pp. 196-197.

> For if the soul, once delivered, as it never was before, is never to return to misery, then there happens in its experience something which never happened before; and this, indeed, something of the greatest consequence, to wit, the secure entrance into eternal felicity. (1)

Karl Löwith commenting upon this says:-

> [Augustine's] final argument against the classical concept of time is, therefore, a moral one: the pagan doctrine is hopeless, for hope and faith are essentially related to the future and a real future cannot exist if past and future times are equal phases within a cyclical recurrence without beginning and end. On the basis of an everlasting revolution of definite cycles, we could expect only a blind rotation of misery and happiness, that is, of deceitful bliss and real misery, but no external happiness ——only an endless repetition of the same but nothing new, redemptive and final. (2)

The peculiarly once-for-all Christian doctrines of the Incarnation and, by implication, the Resurrection(3) are the basis of Augustine's "philosophy of history" which destroyed the classical "philosophy of history". (One wonders why he did not also call upon the doctrine of Creation to support his "philosophy of history".) It is this "philosophy of history" of Augustine's which is the basis of all religious and secular "philosophies of history" characterized by linear and progressive movement, including that of Marxism. Löwith argues unconvincingly that this linear and progressive

(1) De Civ. Dei, xii, 20. Quoted in Löwith, Karl, Meaning in History, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1949, p.164.

(2) Lowith, op.cit., p.163.

(3) There is a legitimate use of "resurrection" which refers to that which takes place repeatedly in the life of a Christian. But that is beside the point in this context.

view of history is not implicit in Scripture; but that controversy is not our concern here.(1)

This whole matter has received a great deal of attention, and there is no need for us to develop it further. However there is one aspect of Augustine's "philosophy of history" which has received less attention and hence does need to be emphasized here; especially as it is related to what we will have to say about the "philosophy of history" in later chapters. This is that Augustine wisely does not attempt to historically disprove the classical view of history nor historically prove his own view. If such an attempt were made it would of course have to be made upon the basis of historical evidence; but historical evidence is much too ambiguous to lend itself to any such program. Augustine's revolution in the attitude toward history did not arise out of the study of history, but from insights and presuppositions which came from his Christian faith.

We turn now from Augustine's "philosophy of history" to a related but distinctive problem: his attitude to culture. Here the voluminous works of Augustine are ambiguous, and different commentators can present different emphases.(2)

(1) It is fascinating to notice how a culture returns to a circular view of history when it abandons Christianity, e.g., the internationally famous French motion picture La Ronde of a few years ago. Alas the classical virtues do not return with the circle; the film proclaims only the circular and vacuous nature of existence.

(2) Löwith (op.cit., Ch.9) emphasizes the Christ "against" or "above" culture element in Augustine; Cochrane (op.cit., pp.501ff. et passim) emphasizes Christ as the "transformer" of culture.

Richard Niebuhr judiciously points out several of the different strains of Augustine's thought concerning the relationship between Christianity and culture. Prominent among these in that in which Christ and his Church are placed "above" or "against" culture. Augustine's interest in monasticism and especially his antithesis between the heavenly and earthly cities point in this direction; as does his dualistic attitude toward slavery and war, i.e. these are to be accepted not because they are right, but because they are part of the necessary and established order of this world.(1)

However Niebuhr also points out that there is also another important strain in Augustine's thought; namely, that the Christ is the means of the transformation or regeneration of culture. He points to Augustine's own pilgrimage from paganism to Christianity; the result of which (as we have already had occasion to point out) was not to discard his Classical background, but to transform it and to put it at the service of Christ and his Church.(2) Niebuhr further calls attention to this same idea as it runs through the Confessions, and ending in the ecstatic words: "Thou, O God, sawest everything that thou hadst made, and, behold it was very good... Let thy works praise thee that we may love thee, and let us love

(1) Cf. De Civ. Dei., ix. 15. This is an appalling example of Augustine's hostility to culture.

(2) Niebuhr, op.cit., pp.208ff.

thee that they works may praise thee."(1) Of other but similar passages Niebuhr makes the following general summary:

> To mankind with this perverted nature and corrupted culture Jesus Christ has come to heal and renew what sin has infected with the sickness unto death. By his life and his death he makes plain to man the greatness of God's love and the depth of human sin; by revelation and instruction he reattaches the soul to God, the source of its being and goodness, and restores to it the right order of love, causing it to love whatever it loves in God and not in the context of selfishness or of idolatrous devotion to the creature(2)

There are many passages in Augustine which partake of the spirit which Niebuhr is calling our attention to in this quotation. For example in Book v.19 Augustine maintains that the City of God is the ideal which must transform political society at its best. Many other such instances could be cited.

As further support for this point of view we can cite C.H. Cochrane who, in his deservedly much praised book Christianity and Classical Culture, argues that Augustine presents Christ as the transformer of culture. In the context of a discussion of Augustine, and especially of the City of God, Cochrane maintains that Christianity prescribes:

> ...adhesion to God, the source of truth, beauty, and goodness, the supreme reality, as the one fundamental principle for individual regeneration.

(1) Conf., xiii. xxvii. 43: xxxi. 46; xxxiii. 48.

(2) Niebuhr, op.cit., pp. 213-214. For passages illustrating Niebuhr's statement see De Civ. Dei, x. 24 and xi. 2. Yet, as Niebuhr points out, such passages need to be balanced by such appalling statements as that found in ix.15.

> and for social reformation, the point of departure for a fresh experiment in human relationships, on the acceptance of which rests the only real hope of fulfilling the promise of secular life. (1)

One would like to believe that this is what Augustine wanted to say. Cochrane cites particularly the City of God, xxii. 22-24 in support of his position. Yet when we turn to those chapters and read them we are not so sure. How frequently and easily Augustine slips over into discussing the "fresh experiment" which is to begin not in this life but in the life to come. At no point do we find the unequivocal statement to match that which we have quoted from Cochrane.

After reading and judging what these various commentators have to say about Augustine, and above all after placing what they have to say against Augustine's own words, we are led to agree with Niebuhr that:

> The possibility of the redirection of all of man's work among temporal things into an activity glorifying God by rejoicing in and cultivating the beauty in His creation... by using all temporal goods with sacramental reverence as incarnations and symbols of eternal words——this possibility rises to view in Augustine's thought only to be dismissed... So the glorious vision of the City of God turns into a vision of two cities, composed of different individuals, forever separate. Here is a dualism more radical than that of Paul or Luther. (2)

(1) Cochrane, op.cit., p.501. Also see the discussion following, and especially p.514.

(2) Niebuhr, op.cit., pp.215-217 Cf.Cranz, F.E., "The Development of Augustine's Ideas on Society Before the Donatist Controversy", "The Harvard Theological Review", Vol. XLVII, No. 4, Oct. 1954. pp.255-316. This detailed study of Augustine's thought in society between the years 386 and 400 reaches conclusions which are in line with those of Niebuhr's.

This conclusion of St. Augustine was not the only possible conclusion; although perhaps it was the only possible conclusion for 5th Century Christian orthodoxy. (Monasticism loomed large in the life of the Church of succeeding generations; but not a conversionist view of culture.) For a theology in which the Incarnation played such a large part, and the doctrines of Creation and the Resurrection of the Body hardly a smaller part, Augustine's conclusion is not even consistent. God's good creation, visited by his Son in the flesh, is not so strange to Him that it is fit only to be "used" as a stepping stone to a heavenly city.

John Calvin. From St. Augustine and the 5th Century we turn to John Calvin and the 16th Century. Our examination will show that little change had taken place in Christian thought about history in the intervening eleven hundred years. If we were to examine some of the men standing between Augustine and Calvin (e.g. Aquinas) we would even find a point of view inferior to that of Augustine.

God's action in history. Because Calvin's theology is so thoroughly grounded in Scripture, it is inevitable that his emphasis upon God's action in history should be equally thorough. Naturally he does not use the 20th Century terminology about "the action of God in history", but nevertheless the meaning is the same. In the context of a commentary on Genesis Calvin writes:-

> For God, otherwise invisible (as we have already said) clothes himself, so to speak, in the image of the world (mundi imaginem quodammodo induit), in which he presents himself to our imagination ...Therefore as soon as the name of God sounds in our ears or a thought of him suggests itself, let us clothe him with this most beautiful attire; finally, let the world be our school, if we desire rightly to know God. (1)

This passage refers specifically to God's creation, and the knowledge of God to be received from this source plays a substantial part in Calvin's thought.(2) But this "natural knowledge" of God cannot and does not stand alone.

> For there are two distinct powers which belong to the Son of God: the first, which is manifest in the architecture of the world and the order of nature; and the second, by which he renews and restores fallen nature. As he is the eternal Word of God, by him the world was made, by his power all things continue to possess the life which they once received; man was endued with an unique gift of understanding, and though by revolt he lost the light of understanding, yet he still sees and understands, so that what he naturally possesses from the grace of the Son of God is not entirely destroyed. But since by his stupidity and perverseness he darkens the light which still dwells in him, it remains that a new office be undertaken by the Son of God, the office of Mediator, to renew by the spirit of regeneration man, who has been ruined. (3)

In spite of the efforts of some critics to minimize the first of these "two distinct powers", they continue to stand

(1) Com. Gen. "Argument". Cited by Downey, Edward A., Jr., The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology, Columbia University Press, New York, 1952, p.6.

(2) For a substantiation of this statement see Downey, op.cit., pp. 131ff. et passim.

(3) Downey, op.cit., pp. 9-10.

as an integral part of Calvin's theology. However it is the second of these two powers, i.e. that which renews and restores human nature through the office of the Mediator, which is the more fundamental. "There is no redemptive knowledge of God, whether patriarchal, prophetic or apostolic, apart from the mediatorial office of Christ."(1) Nor is any "natural knowledge" of God of any avail apart from the Christ.

> God would remain far off, concealed from us, were we not irradiated by the brightness of Christ. (2)

That is, only in the knowledge of Jesus Christ which was historically given, which has been preserved through history by the Church, and which is historically received by the contemporary Christian; only in this way are we the recipients of the knowledge of God.

In the first of our three main contentions (which we stated earlier in this Introduction) we not only maintained that our knowledge of God is historically given; but also that it is historically conditioned. This latter idea is also found in Calvin. Again, and as we would expect, his terminology is not the 20th Century one of "historical conditioning"; rather he speaks in terms of "accommodation". "God cannot be comprehended by us except so far as he accommodates (attemperat) himself to our standard."(3) Downey elaborates this, saying:

(1) Downey, op.cit. p.10. See also the discussion on pp.157ff.
(2) Institutes, 3:2:1.
(3) Comm. Ez. 9:3,4. Cited by Downey, op.cit., pp.3-4.

> ...accommodation is of two varieties: (a) the universal and necessary accommodation of the infinite mysteries of God to finite comprehension, which embraces all revelation, and (b) the special, gracious accommodation to human sinfulness which is connected with the work of redemption. (1)

As we shall see when we come to examine Calvin's understanding of the use of Scripture, he used this principle of accommodation in a strange and often erroneous way. This result is to be explained largely by the fact that Calvin wrote before the advent of modern Biblical criticism. Nevertheless, Calvin's concept is basically the same as that which we will develop later in terms of "historical conditioning".

Closely allied with the principle of accommodation is Calvin's principle of the interrelated or correlated nature of the knowledge of God and of man.

> Our wisdom...consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves. But as these are connected together by many ties, it is not easy to determine which of the two precedes, and gives birth to the other (2)

Commenting on this aspect of Calvin's theology, Downey says:-

> It cannot be too strongly urged...that we are speaking elliptically when we use the phrase "knowledge of God" in reference to Calvin's theology. The words are in fact an abbreviation for the whole complicated interrelation [of God and man] which we have been describing. God did not accommodate himself to man's capacities as a funnel accommodates a stream

(1) Downey, op.cit., p.4. Italics Downey's. Cf. Institutes, 1:13:1; Comm. on I Cor. 13.12; Comm. on John 3.12. The latter two references are cited by Torrence, T.F., Kingdom and Church, Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, 1956, p.127.

(2) Institutes, 1:1:1.

> of fluid to a small opening, but in such a way that the instrument of accommodation (creation, "ourselves") is implicated in what is transmitted. The "knowledge of God" is therefore always man's knowledge of God's revelation (according to the principle of accommodation) and the very revelation of God always in a radical way implies man's self knowledge (according to the principle of correlation). (1)

In the course of this thesis we will repeatedly maintain that man's knowledge of himself is always arrived at historically, i.e. through the examination (however unconscious) of his own personal history and that of other men, and through observing what other men and he himself have brought forth in the historical process. Thus the knowledge of God and the knowledge of man are both historical; and they are, as Calvin says, interrelated. It follows from this that one's doctrines of God, man and history are all interrelated.

Interpretation of Scripture. "One of the great goals of Calvin's life——one to which he referred shortly before his death in his farewell to the Genevan pastors——was purity of doctrine, and this was primarily right understanding of Scripture."(2) What was Calvin's understanding of Scripture? It is convenient, following Downey's lead, to divide the discussion of this question into two parts; the inspiration of the writers of the Bible, and the witness of the Holy Spirit to the authority of the Bible.

(1) Downey, op.cit., p.24. Italics mine.

(2) ibid., p.35.

Concerning the first of these, Downey writes:-

> The Biblical writers are the instruments or organs or amanuenses of the Holy Spirit. Their mouths are "the mouth of the one God"; their writing style is the style of the Holy Spirit. When we turn to them we may say, "Now let us hear God himself speaking in his own words." We owe their writings in Scripture "the same reverence which we owe to God, because it has proceeded from him alone and has nothing human mixed in."..."Whoever wishes to profit in the Scripture, let him first agree to this, that the law and the prophets are not a doctrine delivered at the discretion of men, but are dictated by the Holy Spirit." (1) (2).

This understanding of Scripture naturally presents difficulties in exegesis. These difficulties are accounted for theologically by saying that obscurities or mistakes serve the purposes of the Holy Spirit; or the principle of accommodation is called upon to explain irregularities or omissions (e.g. Moses in his account of the creation (i.e., Genesis) omits speaking of the invisible angels because, in accommodation to the ignorance of men, he speaks only of that which is visible to us).(3) Or again, mistakes may be due to the copyists.(4) Thus, in one way or another, the position is established that the Scriptures in their original form were errorless; free from the admixture of human fallibility. In this way Calvin's teaching about the

(1) Downey, op.cit., pp. 91-92.

(2) For a discussion of how seriously we are to take Calvin's remarks about the "dictation" of Scripture see Downey, op.cit., pp.99ff. His conclusion is that Calvin's use of the work "dictation" is to be taken quite literally.

(3) Cf. Institutes, 1:14:3.

(4) Cf. Downey, op.cit., p.104.

"accommodated" nature of Scripture, which appears to be and indeed is basically so much like what we mean today by the "historically conditioned" nature of Scripture, is developed in such a way as to establish a Bible which is largely historically unconditioned. The fact that the final result of Calvin's thought here is a contradiction of the position from which he started does not destroy the validity of that starting point. If Calvin in his day had had the benefit of the fruits of modern Biblical criticism, then he would have been able to develop his teaching of the "accommodated" nature of Scripture in a more satisfactory way.

We turn now to the second and more congenial aspect of Calvin's understanding of Scripture: the witness of the Holy Spirit to the authority of the Bible. Calvin argues that we do not believe in the Bible first of all because of its inerrant character. Rather it is that the power of the Holy Spirit operating upon our hearts and minds as we read the Bible leads us to the conviction of its truth and authority and (for Calvin) inerrant character.

> For as God alone is a suitable witness for his own word, so also the word will never gain credit in the hearts of men until it is sealed by the internal testimony of the Spirit. It is necessary that the same Spirit who spoke by the mouth of the prophets should penetrate our hearts in order to convince us that they delivered faithfully the message which was divinely given.(1)

(1) Institutes, 1:7:4. Quoted by Downey, op.cit., p.106.

> ...there cannot be a doubt that the certainty of what he [God] taught them was firmly engraven on their hearts, so that they felt assured and knew that the things which they learned came forth from God...(1)

For example, it was the power of the witness of the Holy Spirit to the disciples that assured them of the truth of the resurrection of the Christ; and it is the same power of that same Spirit which convinces us of that same truth when we receive the Biblical account of the Christ's resurrection. Scripture is the instrument which God's Holy Spirit uses to bring forth the Word of God in our lives.(2)

"The question of certainty supplies the dominant motif in Calvin's doctrine of Biblical authority, as well as his doctrine of faith in general."(3) The certainty of this authority is not given primarily by the Church (an "authority")(4), but by the conjoining of Word and Spirit.(5) And as a result of this union, "Scripture bears upon the face of it as clear evidence of its truth, as white and black do of their colour, sweet and bitter of their taste."(6) (This quality of Scripture is often referred to misleadingly as "self-authentication", by which is meant that the testimony of the Holy Spirit bears witness to or authenticates Scripture. Self-authenticating

(1) Institutes, 1:6:2.
(2) Cf. Com. II Tim. 3:16. Quoted by Downey, op.cit., p.106.
(3) Downey, op.cit., p.109.
(4) Cf. Institutes, 1:7:1.
(5) Cf. Institutes, 1:7:3 and 4 where Calvin calls Augustine to his support, and especially De Utilitate Credenti.
(6) ibid., 1:7:2.

then means Spirit-authenticating!) Calvin's whole doctrine of revelation rests confidently upon this correlation of Word and Spirit[1]; a revelation which is two-fold in its content (and both of which we have already mentioned): (1) that which refers to God in his general activity as Maker and Providential Sustainer of heaven and earth, and (2) that which shows God in his special work as the gratuitously merciful Redeemer in Christ.[2]

Christianity and history. When we turn to Calvin's attitude to history we find a position which is remarkably like Augustine's, i.e., a conversionist view of history and culture is delineated and then finally rejected. However this is an evaluation with which some will disagree, arising as it does out of an examination of many conflecting passages in Calvin; passages which can be made to form a unified whole only through the exercise of considerable ingenuity.

On the positive side of Calvin's view of history and culture we have many passages such as the following: "God...by ingrafting us into His Son, constitutes us anew to be lords of the world, that we may lawfully use as our own all the wealth with which He supplies us."[3] Included in this wealth are such things as food, wine, and clothing. These are given

(1) Cf. Downey, op.cit., p.124.
(2) Cf. Downey, Op.cit., p.221
(3) Comm. on I Tim. 4:5. Quoted by Wallace, R.S., Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life, Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, 1959, p.132.

to us not only to supply our physical needs; but, as Calvin is careful to point out, also "for our enjoyment and delight".(1)

Nor are God's blessings confined to material things.

> ...He [God] fills, moves, and invigorates all things by the virtue of the Spirit, and that according to the peculiar nature which each class of beings has received by the Law of Creation. But if the Lord has been pleased to assist us by the work and ministry of the ungodly in physics, dialectics, mathematics, and other similar sciences, let us avail ourselves of it, lest, by neglecting the gifts of God spontaneously offered to us, we be justly punished for our sloth. (2)

Our ingrafting into Christ also has consequences for the Christian's relation to political life.

> But as we lately taught that that kind of government [civil] is distinct from the spiritual and internal kingdom of Christ, so we ought to know that they are not adverse to each other. The former, in some measure, begins the heavenly kingdom in us, even now upon earth...(3)

T.F. Torrance, commenting upon this, says: "Calvin takes this overlapping of the two ages so realistically that he speaks of this world as already in a manner renovated by the coming of Christ."(4) And in the same vein R.S. Wallace says:

(1) Institutes, 3:10:2.

(2) ibid., 2:2:16.

(3) ibid., 4:20:2. See T.F. Torrance, op.cit., pp.156-160 for a discussion of this aspect of Calvin's thought.

(4) Torrance, op.cit., p.121. Italics Torrance's. Cf. Wallace, op.cit., p.133.

> [Calvin reminds] us that if this process has already begun within us, even in a feeble and hidden way——of increasing knowledge and contemplation bringing us into increasing conformity to God——then it is bound to go on all our life with increasing force and fulness, for it promises ultimately the entire restoration into the image of God not only of our own beings but also of the whole Creation. (1)

All this seems to give a clear and positive picture of Calvin's understanding of the relationship between Christianity and history. (In this context, as usual, we are using "history" loosely to include the cultural products of the historical process; and the material world in which that process takes place.) However, the understanding which we have presented so far is one-sided and misleading. Against the passages quoted up to now must be placed those much more numerous statements which speak of the "contempt of this world". It is difficult to evaluate these statements as a body. In certain instances Calvin is clearly speaking of the contempt of this world insofar as the world enthrals and blinds men to God.(2) In other similar instances it is clearly the case that it is the world of Adam (and apart from Christ) which is held in contempt. "Contempt", in its 20th Century usage at least, is not the right word to describe the Christian attitude to unredeemed creation; nevertheless Calvin's meaning is clear, and one would not want to

(1) Wallace, op.cit., p.332.
(2) e.g., Institutes, 3:10:3.

take serious exception to these passages.

There are still other passages, however, in which a much more radical position is taken; a position not so much against sinful self-indulgence and the unredeemed creation as it is against time, space, history and the creation as a whole.

> ...the ascension of Christ means that we must lift up our minds in faith above and beyond the concepts of time and space which we have in this world of bondage and sin and decay. (1)

Elsewhere Calvin says:-

> If heaven is our country, what can the earth be but a place of exile? If departure from the earth is entrance into life, what is the world but a sepulchre, and what is residence in it but immersion in death? If to be freed from the body is to gain full possession of freedom, what is the body but a prison? (2)

Notice why it is that the body is denominated a "prison". Not because it is not ingrafted into the new creation wrought by Christ, but because it hinders us from taking "full possession of freedom" - presumably in heaven. It is to be questioned whether adequate New Testament support can be found for such a point of view.(3) To speak of the body as a prison is in

(1) Torrance, op.cit., p.108. This quotation is Torrance's summary of a number of passages from Calvin. One of them, Institutes 2:16:14f., reads in part: "...Christ, by rising again, ...having laid aside the abject and ignoble conditions of a mortal life..."

(2) Institutes, 3:9:4.

(3) If adequate support is to be found in the New Testament, then it would have to be drawn from such passages as II Cor. 5:1-8. Verse 4 of this passage reads (Revised Standard Version): "For while we are still in this tent, we sigh with anxiety; not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life". Even this verse is more positive in its attitude to earthly life than are those passages from Calvin which we have quoted, and which use such terms as "prison", "sepulchre", "abject", "ignoble" etc.

accord with Hindu thought, but it is not in accord with the faith which teaches the resurrection of the body. Calvin does indeed, having taken away the goodness of the material creation with one hand, give it back with the other hand in almost the next sentence. "We ought never, indeed, to regard it with hatred, except so far as it keeps us subject to sin;..."(1) But then he takes it away once again in the following sentence. "At all events we must stand so affected towards it [earthly life] in regard to weariness or hatred as, while longing for its termination, to be ready at the Lord's will to continue in it..."(2) Do we participate in the partially redeemed and redeeming creation with reluctance?!(3) Is it done primarily—— or at all for that matter——in the spirit of duty and submission to God's will?! This raises the specter of all of the life-denying ghosts which have plagued Protestantism. To what extent is Calvin responsible for this?

It seems to me that the best resolution of this problem is to be found by looking at T.F. Torrance's characterization of Calvin's eschatology as an "eschatology of hope".(4) Christ has descended into the created order, and the now partially redeemed creation is a gift for which we are thankful. Yet this has taken place not so much in order to redeem the creation

(1) Institutes 3:9:4.
(2) ibid.
(3) Cf. Wallace, op.cit., pp. 136-137.
(4) Torrance, op.cit., Ch.4.

(although that has taken place in part) as it has to give us the hope and preparation for the life to come. In the following passage Torrance paraphrases, or quotes, various statements by Calvin pertaining to this matter:

> If God sends us troubles in the present life it is only in order to prepare us through the tolerantia crucis for the glory of the heavenly Kingdom. 'No man has made much progress in the school of Christ who does not look forward with joy to the day of death and resurrection... He who does meditate on the resurrection will learn that though the glory of the new creation is only as yet exhibited fully in Christ the Head, the condition of our present world is only the obverse of the perfect reality which it already has before God. (1)

No one would wish to take exception to these statements (except possibly the first one), but it is the strong reference to the future which we are calling attention to. This is even more evident in the following extract, in substance, taken by R.S. Wallace from one of Calvin's sermons.

> All the tokens of God's earthly providence towards us, the rising and going-down of the sun, the fruitfulness of the earth, the changes of the skies, can be beams of light illuminating our heavenward path when otherwise we would have to walk entirely by faith in the midst of darkness. (2)

Wallace even ventures the opinion that for Calvin the Christian's meditation upon the future life must be thought of as the restoration of the true order of nature.(3)

(1) Torrance, op.cit., p.141.
(2) Wallace, op.cit., 126.
(3) ibid...p.125.

Finally, let us turn to the end of T.F. Torrance's chapter on Calvin's "eschatology of hope". Torrance says that the Church lives under an eschatological impulse, i.e., under "an inner necessity to reach forth even in its present condition of humility and servitude towards that ultimate plenitude and harmony in all its members which is to be revealed."(1) Then he goes on to speak of the three ways in which Calvin's conceives of the activity of the Church under this eschatological impulse. First, there is the gathering of the Church together on every side and the extension of the Gospel; secondly, the restoration of the life, doctrine and worship of the Church; and thirdly, the ecumenical activity of the Church. This, in order that at Christ's second coming we "may be one fold and one shepherd".

This is certainly most acceptable in itself. There is an agreeable emphasis upon the mission of the Church, the reformation of the Church and the reunion of the Church. But by themselves these activities are too much centered upon the Church and upon the future. What of the Church as it looks out into the world seeking to heal and transform it? While admittedly the leavening of the world by the Church can only be accomplished if the Church is continually being gathered together, is that leavening accomplished only by the gathering together of the

(1) Torrance, op.cit., p.163.

Church? And while this leavening does take place in the power of the first coming of Christ and looks forward to the second coming, yet its value is not only determined by reference to the second coming. It has some value in its own right as the expression of God's will for the present.

As is evident, the evaluation of Calvin's understanding of the relationship between Christianity and history (together with its products and the world in which it takes place) is most problematical. H. Richard Niebuhr offers an estimate of this aspect of Calvin's thought which may well serve as a summary of our own conclusions. After calling attention to the many positive elements in Calvin's understanding of this relationship, he writes:-

> ...all these [positive elements] lead to the thought that what the gospel promises and makes possible, as divine (not human) possibility, is the transformation of mankind in all its nature and culture into a kingdom of God in which the laws of the kingdom have been written upon the inward parts. But in this case also the eschatological hope of Christ's transformation of mankind's ruined life is turned into the eschatology of physical death, and the redemption of some men to a life of glory separated not only by its spirit but also by itsphysical conditions from life in the world. The eschatological hope of a new heaven and a new earth brought into being by the coming of Christ is modified by the belief that Christ cannot come to this heaven and earth but must await the death of the old and the rising of a new creation. To the eternal over-againstness of God and man, Calvin adds the dualism of temporal and eternal existence, and the other dualism of an eternal heaven and an eternal hell. Though

> Calvinism has been marked by the influence of the eschatological hope of the transformation by Christ and by its consequent pressing toward the realization of the promise, this element in it has always been accompanied by a separatist and repressive note...(1)

Friedrich Schleiermacher. As will become evident, the 250 years between John Calvin and Friedrich Schleiermacher witnessed a much greater change in theological thinking than had the preceeding 1100 years between St. Augustine and Calvin. Moreover, the type of theological thinking associated with Schleiermacher continued right down into our own century. Barth says of him: "What he said of Frederick the Great in his Academy address entitled 'What goes to make a great man' applies also to himself: 'He did not found a school, but an era.'"(2) So it is that Schleiermacher's theology helped to engender the climate of religious thinking out of which the problems to be investigated in this thesis have arisen.

God's action in history. In his early book, On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers (1799),(3) Schleiermacher states in general but very clear terms the place of the concrete and historical in religion.

> If a definite religion [e.g. Christianity] may not begin with an original fact, it cannot begin at all. There must be a

(1) Niebuhr, op.cit., pp.217-218.

(2) Barth, Karl, From Rousseau to Ritschl, SCM Press, London, 1959, p.306.

(3) Schleiermacher, Friedrich, On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers, Harper Torchbooks, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1958.

> common ground for selecting some one religious element and placing it at the centre, and this ground can only be a fact. And if a religion is not to be definite it is not a religion at all, for religion is not a name to be applied to loose, unconnected impulses. (1)

This applies at least to all of the great monotheistic religions, in which we see the "endlessly progressive work of the Spirit that reveals Himself in all human history".(2) But, Schleiermacher emphasizes, it must be definite: for "nothing in a general and indefinite form can actually be communicated. It must be individual and thoroughly definite, or it is nothing."(3)

In his more explicitly Christian and churchly work, The Christian Faith, Schleiermacher applied this insight directly to Christianity. He states that it is impossible to conceive that Christian piety could have arisen in any way except through the "historical connection with the impulse which proceeded from Christ."(4) Concerning Christian dogmas "there is an inner experience to which they may all be traced: they rest upon a given; and apart from this they could not have arisen, by deduction or synthesis, from universally recognized and communicable propositions."(5) And this experience comes through "historical connection with the impulse which proceeded from Christ".(6)

(1) On Religion, p.234. Cf., p.80.
(2) ibid., p.214. (3) ibid., p.155.
(4) Schleiermacher, Friedrich, The Christian Faith, edited by Mackintosh and Stewart, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1928, p.44.
(5) The Christian Faith, p.67. Italics Schleiermacher's.
(6) Cf. The Christian Faith, pp.49ff, 57,598: On Religion, pp. 246-247.

As we stated earlier in this Introduction, revelation is not only historically given, but also historically conditioned. Schleiermacher's theology recognizes this situation; for not only is Christian piety and dogma historically connected "with the impulse which proceeded from Christ", but it is also brought to a more perfect expression in succeeding ages. Concerning the Apostolic age Schleiermacher writes:

> ...its thinking as a whole cannot supply a norm for that of later ages. For owing to its naturally most unequal distribution of the divine Spirit...it was very easily possible...that expositions of religion might be produced which, strictly speaking, were rather Judaism or Paganism coloured by Christianity than Christianity itself, i.e. were, if considered as Christian, in the highest degree impure. (1)

In all this we see that Schleiermacher at least intended to give a central and determinative place in his theology to the action of God in the person of Jesus Christ. He recognized that this historical event was the only possible basis for the origin and continuation of the Christian faith. However, when we come to those passages which deal with his understanding of the Old Testament, we find a thoroughly inadequate conception of the place and value of the history of the Hebrew people. For example:

(1) The Christian Faith, p.595.

> Hence the rule may be set up that almost everything else [other than the Messianic prophecies] in the Old Testament is, for our Christian usage, but the husk or wrapping of its prophecy, and that whatever is most definitely Jewish has least value. (1)

In The Christian Faith (par. 132) there is a strong affirmation of the limited validity of the Old Testament; its religious ideas are outmoded and imperfect. There is of course some basis for this position; a position which, incidentally, one wishes had found some place in Calvin's theology. Nevertheless, the reduction of the Old Testament to a shell containing the Messianic prophecies is far too radical and totally unsatisfactory. Here the Holy Spirit at work in the life of the Christian believer has judged the Word of God in the Old Testament; has found it wanting; and has consequently largely rejected it. To a limited extent this is a process in which most if not all Christians engage. However, the radical results of this process in Schleiermacher's theology leads us to question whether, in this situation at least, this is the Holy Spirit at work or "merely man's religious consciousness"(2).

It is just in this area of God's action in history that Barth, in his essay on Schleiermacher in From Rousseau to Ritschl makes his main criticism of Schleiermacher; and this not only in regard to his treatment of the Old Testament, but of his

(1) The Christian Faith, p.62. Cf. On Religion, pp.259ff.
(2) Cf. From Rousseau to Ritschl, pp. 352-353.

theology as a whole. Barth says that in Schleiermacher's theology experience (religious experience, faith) threatens to overcome the Word of God. "The Word is not so assured here in its independence in respect to faith as should be the case if this theology of faith were a true theology of the Holy Spirit"(1) Barth does not say, and cannot say on the basis of Schleiermacher's works, that the Word is dissolved by faith or that it has lost its independence. Except in regard to the Old Testament (quite an exception!) the quotations which we have made from Schleiermacher in the preceeding paragraphs indicate that this dissolution or loss of independence did not in fact take place. In Barth's opinion, "The only thing which prevents it is Schleiermacher's good will in not allowing things to develop so far."(2)

What is the justice of this criticism? In regard to the Old Testament we see, exactly as Barth says, experience overcoming the Word of God.(3) It is surprising that Barth does not call our attention to this. Further, if we may hold Schleiermacher's theology responsible for the religious climate which prevailed and largely still prevails up until our own time, then Barth's criticism is well made. At least until a few years ago the Word of God was submerged in a variety of

(1) From Rousseau to Ritschl, p.352. Italics Barth's.

(2) ibid., p.352.

(3) If we were to start picking and choosing isolated elements out of the Old Testament, certainly the Messianic prophecies which Schleiermacher wanted to retain would not be our first choice.

phenomena which might loosely be included under the heading of "religious experience", e.g. a strange cult of Jesus emphasizing his "teachings" and "precepts" in which were to be discovered "eternal truths", feelings of brotherly love, the emphasis upon and cultivation of religious sentiment often degenerating into sentimentality (many 19th Century hymns) etc. Now none of this is found in Schleiermacher; but the step between this and Schleiermacher is, however perverse, not a long one.

This is not to say that one is entirely contented with the position from which Barth criticizes Schleiermacher. Barth says: "It is between these two poles [of experience and history] that Schleiermacher's interpretation of Christianity takes its course..."(1) Barth says this because he feels it is distinctive of his theology. But one would have thought, if we consider as Schleiermacher does that the action of God in history is a part of history, that all theology moves between experience and history. The New Testament is clearly written within this tension. And if we would like for Schleiermacher to give to the Word of God a more objective and independent existence than he does; then we would also like to see in Barth a clearer recognition that experience is the medium of revelation, that revelation is recorded experience, and that when the historical account of the experience of revelation is truly received by a later generation it becomes (in a new but genuine way) the medium of revelation once again.

(1) From Rousseau to Ritschl, p.331.

However, with these misgivings, we will give Barth the last word and agree with him in this careful judgment of this ambiguous aspect of Schleiermacher's theology:-

> ...according to para. 10 of the Doctrine of Faith,...the impulse proceeding from Christ imparts to Christianity colour and tone, historical breadth and the possibility of its existence. Religion in this determined impulse is real as Christian religion. But its truth, its content, is none the less nothing but the feeling of utter dependence, at its highest level, in its stamp as awareness of redemption. (1)

The Interpretation of Scripture. In Schleiermacher we encounter for the first time, in the course of this historical survey, an expression of an important contemporary problem; namely, the fact that Holy Scripture can become static, propositional information which does not provide a channel for the operation of the Holy Spirit. This problem is a form of the traditional problem which we have already discussed in terms of "letter and Spirit". However, the modern form of this problem is posed in a more radical and acute way, and consequently deserves and has received a larger and more detailed treatment.(2) Schleiermacher states the problem in these words.

(1) From Rousseau to Ritschl, p.351.

(2) As we will see later, this problem of the interpretation of Scripture has the closest parallels with the problem of the interpretation of historical documents. Giambattista Vico's statement of that historical problem (The New Science, A.D.1744) preceeded Schleiermacher; but Vico's work was not recognized until the latter part of the 19th Century.

> And when, the first bloom of Christianity being past and it was appearing to rest from its works, these works, so far as they were contained in the sacred scriptures, were regarded as a finished codex of religion,...(1)

That is to say, the Bible was regarded as a codex——or chronicle might be a better word——of religious facts which could be used rather as one uses a log table. This approach to the Bible is still sufficiently with us that no one should have any difficulty in understanding what Schleiermacher has in mind here. He has this to say about those who would use Holy Scripture in this way:-

> Belief...usually so called, which is to accept what another has said or done, or to wish to think and feel as another has thought or felt, is a hard and base service... To wish to have and hold a faith that is an echo, proves that a man is incapable of religion; to demand it of others, shows that there is no understanding of religion. (2)

Those persons who use the Bible in this way turn it into a "mausoleum, a monument that a great spirit once was there, but is now no more."(3) And as an implication of this, Schleiermacher further denies that Holy Scripture reveals doctrines to us; a denial which only becomes vitally necessary in a rationalistic age.(4)

But the Spirit once was in Scripture, and is there still

(1) On Religion, p.249.
(2) ibid., pp.90-91.
(3) ibid., p.91.
(4) The Christian Faith, pp.50ff.

for those who come to it in the right way. How are we to account for this presence of the Spirit in Scripture? Not by any idea that the contents of the Bible were "dictated" to its authors.(1) And rejecting this, Schleiermacher further rejects the kind of interpretation which accompanies a "dictated" theory of scripture; namely, "the suggestion that in virtue of their divine inspiration the sacred books demand a hermeneutical and critical treatment different from one guided by the rules which obtain elsewhere."(2) Rather, turning his back on all this, Schleiermacher finds that the inspiration of Scripture resides in Christ alone.

> All that they teach derives from Christ; hence in Christ Himself must be the original divine bestowal of all that the Holy Scriptures contain——not, however, in isolated particulars, by way of inspiration, but as a single indivisible bestowal of knowledge out of which the particulars evolve organically. Thus the speaking and writing of the Apostles as moved by the Spirit was simply a communication drawn from the divine revelation in Christ.(3)

On this basis, Schleiermacher continues, the Apostles' faith in Jesus was not based upon the Old Testament; and especially was it not based upon some special theory of inspiration of the Old Testament. Rather it was the encounter with Jesus as the Christ which awakened their faith; and only then did they go on to adduce prophetic testimonies in confirmation of their faith."(4) "And

(1) The Christian Faith, p.598.
(2) ibid., p.600. Cf. p.605.
(3) ibid., p.598.
(4) ibid., p.592.

just as their faith sprang from Christ's preaching of Himself, so in the case of others faith sprang from the preaching of Christ by the Apostles and many more."[1] The New Testament is in effect such preaching; and our faith, like that of the Apostles, springs from our encounter with Christ mediated by the New Testament.[2] Our situation is in no essential way different from that of the Apostles. "And when Holy Scripture is described as 'sufficient'...what is meant is that through our use of Scripture the Holy Spirit can lead us into all truth, as it leads the Apostles and others who enjoyed Christ's direct teaching."[3] Holy Scripture is the God-given instrument which the Holy Spirit uses in order that the Word of God may appear in our lives.

We have emphasized the positive elements in this brief sketch of Schleiermacher's understanding of Scripture. And there are other such elements which we might have turned out attention to, e.g. the valuable although not wholly satisfactory attempt to deal anew with such ideas as "miracle", "inspiration" and "prophecy"[4]; and the insistence that non-Christian religions are not entirely erroneous in what they have to say about God.[5] However, if we are to present a balanced picture

(1) The Christian Faith, p.593.
(2) Cf. The Christian Faith, p.593. The "New Testament" here includes by implication preaching and the sacrements. Cf. The Christian Faith, p.384.
(3) The Christian Faith, p.606.
(4) On Religion, pp.88-89.
(5) The Christian Faith, p.52.

here, we must make mention of certain largely unsatisfactory aspects of Schleiermacher's thought in this area. There is, for example, his definition of revelation as: "Every original and new communication of the Universe to man..."(1) Or again, his separation of the "speeches" in the New Testament as being more valuable than the other parts;(2) and his somewhat unguarded proposals about the status of the Canon of the New Testament, and the possibility of opening it in order that later material might be included.(3) We have already spoken of the violent treatment which the Old Testament receives at his hands, and of Barth's criticism of the relationship between the Word of God and religious experience in this theology. In short, Schleiermacher's interpretation of Scripture is a mixture of valuable and permanent insights into its use, together with other ideas which are quite misleading.

Christianity and History. If we had certain reservations about Barth's judgment of the relationship between Word and Spirit on Schleiermacher's theology, we can wholeheartedly endorse his further judgment that that theology is a "culture theology". Barth writes:-

(1) On Religion, p.89. Cf. The Christian Faith, p.51.
(2) On Religion, p. 181.
(3) ibid., p. 249. Cf. pp. 264-265 and The Christian Faith, p. 605. However, there is much of value in what Schleiermacher has to say on this matter.

> By birth and upbringing in its innermost sanctuary his theology is cultural theology: in religion itself which is the true object of his theology, it is the exaltation of life in the most comprehensive sense, the exaltation, unfolding, transfiguration, ennobling of the individual and social human life which is at stake. Civilization as the triumph of the spirit over nature is the most peculiar work of Christianity, just as the quality of being a Christian is for its own part the crown of a thoroughly civilized consciousness. (1)

Schleiermacher sees religion and especially Christianity in its relationship to the historical, cultural and social life of men as one of mediation between the "finite" and the Infinite. In the elegant style so characteristic of On Religion he writes:-

> Yet this complete form of religion [which Schleiermacher is advocating] remains the highest, and it is only by it, that, with satisfactory results, man sets alongside of the finite that he specially concentrates on (i.e. his vocation), an Infinite; alongside the contracting endeavour for something definite and complete, expansive soaring in the Whole and the Inexhaustible. In this way he restores the balance and harmony of his nature, which would be lost for ever, if, without at the same time having religion, he abandoned himself to one object, were it the most beautiful, most splendid. A man's special calling is the melody of his life, and it remains a simple, meagre series of notes unless religion, with its endlessly rich variety, accompany it with all notes, and raise the simple song to a full-voiced, glorious harmony. (2)

This, Schleiermacher continues, is "really the nature of religion".(3) Note that this is not a simple glorification of culture. Culture alone leads only to separation and

(1) From Rousseau to Ritschl, pp.315-316. Cf. Niebuhr, op.cit., pp. 102-103.

(2) On Religion, p. 87.

(3) ibid. p.87.

unfulfilled longing for the true source of life.(1) Rather it is culture united with the Infinite which is being held up before us here; a unity in which the individual and distinct is lost and the Universe found.(2) After we have become accustomed to the alien language in which it is expressed, there is a grandeur in this conception of the relationship between religion (specifically Christianity) and culture. This is especially and refreshingly true when it is set side-by-side with, say, Calvin's endless repetitions about the meanness of this world. At the same time, however, a most fundamental weakness is evident in Schleiermacher at this point: he obscures the difference between God and man; Church and culture.(3) But if he obscures this difference, he does not deny or obliterate it.

> It is just the intuition of the Universal resistance of finite things to the unity of the Whole, and of the way the Deity treats this resistance. Christianity sees how He reconciles the hostility to Himself, and sets bounds to the ever-increasing alienation by scattering points here and there over the whole that are at once finite and infinite, human and divine. (4)

In the process of history the Church mediates between the "finite" and the Infinte; a process in which through the

(1) On Religion, p.92. (2) ibid., p.138.

(3) For a typical example of the way in which Schleiermacher obscures or softens the difference see The Christian Faith (p. 54) where "Godlessness" is replaced by "Godforgetfulness".

(4) On Religion, p.241. This point-of-view is related to Schleiermacher's Christology; a fact which becomes explicit in The Christian Faith (p. 64 et passim).

activity of the Church "redemption is being ever more completely realized in time, and the Holy Spirit is thus pervading the whole ever more perfectly..."(1) Implied in this is a recognition of the historically conditioned and hence limited forms of the Apostolic Church(2); the need to be aware of the corruptions which the Church has undergone(3); and the resultant duty to extend(4) and purify the doctrine of the Church.(5) The Church successfully engaging in this process is the "true church" which Schleiermacher commends to his readers; "the church which has vanquished all opposition, whose training is complete... [and in which] the religious view of life is dominant."(6) This is the divinely established body which mediates between the "finite" and the Infinite.

This concludes our introduction in which we have distinguished and discussed three aspects of the Christian's concern for history. These are: (1) the view which is taken about the place and importance of God's action in history; (2) the understanding of the nature of the Bible which we take to the interpretation of that book; (3) the attitude which is taken toward history as a whole, and including the cultural products of historical development.

(1) The Christian Faith, p. 595
(2) ibid., pp. 595-596.
(3) On Religion, p. 216 et passim.
(4) ibid., 148.
(5) The Christian Faith, p. 243.
(6) On Religion, p. 157.

We have directed these three questions toward a number of important and representative Christian theologians; and we have found that the results of this examination have been diverse, yet in each case fruitful. The significant response which can be evoked from Christianity under this kind of questioning stretches from the Old and New Testaments right down into our own times. Therefore we conclude that the problem of history is thrown at us in this three-fold form; and that this problem as we have described it is of the essence of Christianity, not a modern problem superimposed upon Christianity.

Now we stand in our own age with this same problem on our hands. But now the problem has one very significant difference. This difference is that today there exists a self-consciousness about history such as has never existed before. It is this self-consciousness which makes it imperative that we deal with the problem of history afresh. This self-consciousness about history is particularly marked in some historians and theologians Let us turn to them now and see what happens. We will begin with the 18th Century and Giambattista Vico.

PART II

THREE HISTORIANS:
HISTORY AND ITS RELEVANCE TO THEOLOGY.

"Think now/History has many cunning passages,"

Gerontion: T.S. Eliot

Chapter II.

VICO'S UNDERSTANDING OF HISTORY

1. Review and Prospect.

In the preceding section we have surveyed various ideas and attitudes of the Church in regard to the nature of history as a whole, the interpretation of Scripture, and the relationship between Christianity and culture. With this as a background we turn now to consider a related set of problems which lie, as we shall see, within the area which we have surveyed. These problems may be generally described as those associated with the understanding of the nature of historical event and its interpretation. We wish to approach these problems by considering the relevant writings of three men: Giambattista Vico, a Neapolitan who wrote in the first half of the 18th Century; Benedetto Croce, who wrote around the turn of the present century; and finally R.G. Collingwood, whose death occured in 1946.

The reason for selecting these three men will become apparent as we proceed. However, it will be well if at this point we give a brief explanation of our choice. The first and most important reason is that each of these men spoke at length and with originality on the problem of the interpretation of historical events. In this endeavor Croce acknowledges his dependence upon Vico, considering him to be "the philosopher most closely akin to myself",(1); and Collingwood in turn recognizes his

(1) Croce, B. An Autobiography, Oxford University Press, London, 1927. pp. 74-75.

indebtedness to Croce and Vico. Each of these men has received a wide hearing and has exerted a relatively wide influence. This influence is manifested both in those persons who have accepted and built upon the thinking of these men, and in those who have felt themselves compelled to oppose them.(1)

A second and negative reason for our choice is that very few men have dealt seriously with the problem of the interpretation of historical evidence. In contrast, many have written "philosophy of history", attempting to apply more-or-less arbitrary criteria to the course of history in order to interpret the past and to predict the future, e.g., Augustine, Marx, Spengler, Toynbee etc. However, "philosophy of history" is not the central concern of this thesis. A host of others have retold and recast at second hand original work which has been done on various aspects of historical investigation. With this second-hand material we are naturally not concerned. But due to the relatively recent emergence of genuine historical studies, the number of men who have made a sustained and original contribution to the problem of the interpretation of historical evidence is very limited indeed.(2)

(1) For a survey of Vico's influence see Ch. 4 of the Introduction to The Autobiography of Giambattista Vico, translated by M.H. Fisch and T.G. Bergin, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1944. A comparable survey does not exist for Croce and Collingwood.

(2) For a good summary of the historical development of the theory and writing of history see Collingwood, R.G., The Idea of History, Oxford University Press, 1946, pp. 14 - 204.

The final reason for our choice is that none of these men wrote as a theologian. Vico considered himself to be a loyal Roman Catholic, but he carefully excluded theological investigation from his writings. Hebrew history he considered to be in a different category from "gentile" history, and he carefully excludes the former from his investigations. Moreover, although Vico did not recognize it, there is a strong secular current in his thought.(1) Turning to Croce, it will be seen that he writes from an emphatically humanistic viewpoint. He probably would have been astounded that there was any relation between his investigations and the subject of revelation. Collingwood's religious position, while probably Anglican, never becomes explicit. In any case he certainly does not write as a theologian.

One might well ask: Why does the non-theological character of the work of these men commend them in an inquiry about the nature of revelation? The answer is that there is an illuminating similarity in the way in which the secular historian approaches his evidence of historical event, and the way in which the theologian handles the same problem when dealing with revelation. There is undoubtedly a border line (or area) between the two inquiries, but to stand on this border line will illuminate the task both of the historian and the theologian.

(1) For the problem of the unrecognized secularism of Vico's thought see Croce, B., The Philosophy of Giambattista Vico, G. Allen and Unwin, London, 1913, Appendix III et passim.

With this general introduction we turn now to the first of these men, Giambattista Vico.

2. The New Science of Giambattista Vico.

Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) spent his entire life in and near Naples, a life marked by personal poverty and the failure to obtain any important and genuinely remunerative position on the faculty of the university there. In consequence these years were spent, in addition to the discharge of the responsibilities of an unimportant professorship, in the writing of a number of minor works; and above all in "the exasperating difficulties...of a good twenty years" which resulted in The New Science. Of the minor writings the most important are the Ancient Wisdom of the Italians (1710) and the Universal Law (1721).(1) The first edition of The New Science appeared in 1725; a second and greatly revised edition appeared in 1730; with a third and final edition appearing in the year of Vico's death, 1744. The New Science is Vico's magnum opus, representing the culmination and full embodiment of all of Vico's thought.(2) For this reason we will be concerned exclusively here with The New Science

(1) For the exposition of these minor works, and their eventual embodiment in The New Science, see the following: Fisch and Bergin, op.cit., pp.31 - 46; Flint, Robert, Vico, Wm. Blackwood and Sons, London, 1884, Chapters 5 - 8; Croce, B., The Philosophy of Giambattista Vico, Chapters 1 - 3; Caponigri, A.R., Time and Idea, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1953, Ch. 1.

(2) All of Vico's critics are in substantial agreement as to the inclusive character of The New Science. See: Croce, B., The Philosophy of Giambattista Vico, p.36; Caponigri, op. cit., p.31; Fisch and Bergin, op.cit., pp.38ff.; Flint, op.cit., p.45.

The first warning to be given to anyone approaching The New Science is that it is marked by a certain crudity. This characteristic is seen first in its style, which is highly repetitive and digressive. The digressions consist of bringing in more-or-less tangential matters in support of his argument; digressions which to Vico must have appeared very much to the point. Another manifestation of this crudity, from the point of view of the 20th Century, is the pervasive error as to fact, e.g., that early men were giants, that the universal flood occurred 1656 years after the Creation, that Greek history begins after the universal flood etc.

In regard to these characteristics of The New Science two things need to be said. The first is that Vico's work must be seen in its historical context. A reading of scientific works of the same period, and indeed even of the 19th Century, reveals a similar crudity from the point of view of the 20th Century reader. Secondly, it will become evident in what follows that, in spite of fancifulness and error as to fact, Vico had a profound insight into the problem of the interpretation of historical evidence.

A final general comment needs to be made concerning our approach to The New Science. Two elements are evident in Vico's treatment of history. The first of these is a theory of knowledge and a method of reaching historical knowledge. The second

element is his "philosophy of history", in which he attempts to set forth the "ideal eternal history traversed in time by the histories of all nations". Of course Vico saw the two as a unified whole. They can, however, be distinguished; and even if we may have to dismiss his "philosophy of history" as untenable, we may still find great value in his understanding of the proper use of historical evidence.

2. The Structure of The New Science.

It will be helpful to outline the structure of Vico's most unusual book, and to give enough of the content to enable the reader to have some indication of the line of argument and the terms in which it is set forth. This will serve as a useful background for the discussion of those sections of the book which are relevant to this thesis.

Prefacing Book I there appears the "Idea of the Work". This consists of an explanation of an allegorical picture contained in this section. In this explanation are found all of the principle ideas of The New Science. An allegorical mode of presentation may have been congenial to the mind of readers in the 17th Century, but even with Vico's explanation this section is hardly comprehensible to the modern reader. When the rest of The New Science has been read with some care, then the "Idea of the Work" is seen to be just what its title says that it is.

Book I. Book I is entitled "Establishment of Principles", and consists first of all of a chronological table with notes which "sets forth in outline the world of the ancient nations, starting from the universal flood..." This section can only be described as a curiosity. In an effort such as this Vico's errors as to fact count most heavily against him.

The second and more important section of Book I is headed "Elements", and consists of over 100 "axioms" which will guide Vico in subsequent sections as he seeks to understand historical evidence and to describe the "ideal eternal history traversed in time by the histories of all nations". Examples of these "axioms" are: "Because of the indefinite nature of the human mind, whenever it is lost in ignorance, man makes himself the measure of all things."(1); "Every nation...whether Greek or barbarian, has had the same conceit that it before all other nations invented the comforts of life and that its remembered history goes back to the very beginnings of the world."(2); "All barbarian histories have fabulous beginnings."(3); "The nature of things is nothing but their coming into being (nascimento) at certain times and in certain fashions."(4)

(1) The New Science, translated by T.G. Bergin and M.H. Fisch, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1948, paragraph 120. All references to The New Science will be given in terms of paragraph numbers. These numbers are uniform with those in the text edited by Fausto Nicoline and appearing as volume 112 and part of volume 113 in the Scritteri d'Italia, Bari, Laterza, 1928.

(2) par. 125

(3) par. 202

(4) par. 147

Some of these "axioms", such as the first two quoted above, have a "psychological" element in them, i.e., they are statements about a constant pattern of thoughts which Vico had observed in the study of history and, undoubtedly, among his contemporaries. At several points he makes reference to the mental patterns of children in order to support his argument. Another group of "axioms", such as the third one quoted above, seem to spring largely from historical study. Still another group, such as the last one quoted above, is mainly philosophical in character. These three groups are by no means exhaustive of the "axioms" found in Book I; nor, in fact, do they lend themselves to any strict grouping.

In the subsequent Books of The New Science Vico makes frequent reference to these "axioms" in the course of his argument. The "axioms" support his argument, and reciprocally the success of the argument gives support to the "axioms". However it should not be thought that Vico first arrived at these "axioms", and then proceeded to his following investigations. There is no indication that he proceeded in so straightforward a manner as this; to a large extent "axioms" and investigation developed together. This procedure is just what we would expect from the last of the "axioms" which we quoted. "The nature of things [the emphasis of Book I] is nothing but their coming into being (nascimento) at certain times and in certain fashions [the discovery of which origins as to time and

fashion is the goal of the subsequent Books]." In other words, in the study of origins (actual historical investigation) we come to know the nature (expressed in the "axioms") of the events and documents which we study. In turn, this knowledge of their nature reflects light back onto the actual historical events and documents studied, and to some extent upon similar historical events and documents. We will return to this when we come to examine Vico's theory of knowledge.

Book II. Book II is entitled "Poetic Wisdom", and forms the main body of The New Science. By the term "poetic" Vico means "pre-reflective". It is the original mode of human understanding.

> ...by a necessity of human nature, poetic style arose before prose style; just as, by the same necessity, the fables, or imaginative universals, arose before the rational or philosophical universals which were formed through the medium of prose speech. (1)

Vico maintains that "Doctrines must take their beginnings from [the beginnings] of the matters of which they treat."(2) And what are these beginnings? They are first of all "poetic"; the total production of this first stage of human consciousness was "poetic" or "prereflective" in character. Therefore we must not, as do "men of limited ideas", accept these "poetic" productions at their face value.(3) Rather they must be interpreted

(1) par. 460.
(2) par. 314.
(3) par. 319.

and understood as "pre-reflective" and veiled forms of knowledge; the historian must sympathetically and imaginatively attempt to understand what was being expressed in terms or gods, heroes, the formation of words etc. This discovery Vico considered to be the "key" to The New Science; it sets his enterprise in motion and pervades its development. He writes of it:

> ...early gentile peoples...were poets who spoke in poetic characters. This discovery, which is the master key of this Science, has cost us the persistent research of almost all of our literary life, because with our civilized natures we cannot at all imagine and can only understand by great toil the poetic nature of these first men. (1)

The value of this approach, as we see it in Book II, varies. When he argues against the then popular view that primitive peoples possessed men of "matchless wisdom", then we see his procedure bearing fruit and making an important contribution to historical inquiry in his day.(2) On the other hand the results are not always so happy. For example, when he concludes that men were originally of what we would call normal stature, but became "giants of enormous build". In Vico's view the "...causes [of giantism] are to be traced to the savage education of their children."(3) He supports this position as usual by etymological analysis. In such instances as this it is clear that Vico's analysis does not grow out of the study of historical evidence

(1) par. 34 The limited way in which Vico uses the work "imagination" can be seen in this passage.

(2) pars. 119-128; 347-375 et passim.

(3) par. 170. See also pars. 369-373 et passim.

or of the observation of human mental patterns, but at best out of the study of rumour and speculation which had passed for history. Then with great assurance he imposes this understanding upon the historical process. This is a characteristic which the reader feels at work throughout Vico, and not just in the patently fanciful and erroneous sections as that relating to giantism.

Once again we should remind ourselves that The New Science was written in the first part of the 18th Century. Moreover it is not the validity or invalidity of the specific content of Vico's results that matter (although this was occasionally valid and important), so much as it is the theory of knowledge and method of historical investigation which he employed. In subsequent sections we will show the value of these in spite of imperfections and misapplications.

The aspectsoof "poetic" or "pre-reflective" life which Vico examines by means of this method are comprehensive indeed. They include language and writing, logic, morals, economics, politics, physics, astronomy, chronology and geography. In each examination we see the same presupposition as to the "poetic" origin of knowledge, the constant reference back to the "axioms" of Book I, the use of etymology (often completely implausible) to support his position, and the same mixture (in varying proportions) of insight and fantasy. In a summary of

Book II he restates his theme and sets forth the substance and conclusion of the Book. Seen in the context of his day, this statement substantiates the validity and importance of Vico's endeavour.

> We have shown that poetic wisdom justly deserves two great and sovereign tributes. The one, clearly and constantly accorded to it, is that of having founded gentile mankind, though the conceit of the nations on the one hand and that of the scholars on the other, the former with ideas of an empty magnificance and the latter with ideas of an impertinent philosophical wisdom, have in effect denied it this honour by their very efforts to affirm it. The other, concerning which a vulgar tradition has come down to us, is that the wisdom of the ancients made its wise men, by a single inspiration, equally great as philosophers, lawmakers, captains, historians, orators and poets, on which account it has been so greatly sought after. But in fact it made or rather sketched them such as we have found them in the fables. For in these, as in embryos or matrices, we have discovered the outlines of all esoteric wisdom. And it may be said that in the fables the nations have in a rough way and in the language of the human senses described in the beginnings of this world of sciences, which the specialized studies of scholars have since clarified for us by reasoning and generalization. From all this we may conclude what we set out to show in this second book: that the theological poets were the sense and the philosophers the intellect of human wisdom. (1) (2)

Book III. Book III, entitled "Discovery of the True Homer", is an attempt to apply the method and insight of the

(1) par. 779.

(2) Vico refers to the poets of primitive times as "theological poets", not in our sense but in the sense that it was an "age of gods" and all of life was enveloped in the "divine". These poets dealt in terms of "sense" (sensation), the concrete, fables etc. This imperfect truth was later clarified by the intellect of the philosophers. This last conception is unsatisfactory, and will not be dealt with here. For an exposition and criticism of this see Croce, B., The Philosophy of Giambattista Vico, Ch. 4.

first two Books to the problem of the authorship of the Iliad and the Odyssey. In the introduction to this book Vico states the position against which he sets himself.

> Although our demonstration in the preceding book that poetic wisdom was the vulgar wisdom of the peoples of Greece, who were first theological and later heroic poets, should carry as a necessary consequence that the wisdom of Homer was not at all different in kind, yet, as Plato left firmly fixed the opinion that Homer was endowed with sublime esoteric wisdom (and all the other philosophers have followed in his train, with [pseudo-] Plutarch foremost, writing an entire book on the matter), we shall here examine particularly if Homer was ever a philosopher. (1)

Vico then proceeds to show from the internal evidence of the two poems (principally the savagery of the Iliad and the cunning displayed in the Odyssey) that the author(s) could not have been a philosopher of "sublime esoteric wisdom". He concludes that the poems are the product of nations of people over a period of several generations, and not that of one or two individual poets; that the more savage Iliad preceeds the Odyssey in time of composition; and that the p[illegible]ne of origin of the two poems is different.

The refutation of the conception of Homer as a man of "sublime esoteric wisdom" was a permanent contribution to Homeric studies, while some of Vico's more general observations possess insight which is to be found in contemporary and still far from settled Homeric criticism. The relative freedom from

(1) par. 780

fantastic speculation and the attendant degree of success of Vico's effort to apply his method in this area comes from the fact that his method was in this case controlled by the two specific documents under consideration.

Book IV. In Book IV, "The Course of Nations", we leave the excursus into literary criticism and return to the direct elaboration of Vico's view on history. It is here and in the following Book (Book V, "The Recurrence of Human Things in the Resurgence of Nations") that Vico's "philosophy of history" becomes most explicit. (In a less explicit and less developed form this "philosophy of history" is, like many of Vico's themes, to be found throughout The New Science.) Here it is that Vico elaborates an ideal pattern which he thinks all nations traverse in the course of their historical development. Moreover, as we shall see, a nation may traverse this course more than once.

Now it is the "philosophy of history" which quite rightly arouses the ire of professional historians, whether it be the type propounded by Vico, Marx, Toynbee or whoever. (We may provisionally define "philosophy of history" as the creation of a speculative pattern to which actual historical events are supposed to conform.) When we come to consider Croce and Collingwood we shall see that they are emphatic in their rejection of the attempt to create a "philosophy of history".

However, before we make a critical evaluation of Vico's own "philosophy of history" let us first describe it.

The fundamental problem of any "philosophy of history" is to explain or demonstrate the relation between the speculative pattern and the historical record. The goal is to demonstrate that they coincide. This is, of course, true of Vico too; and his attempt, while not acceptable, does possess some subtlety. It will be helpful to have a statement of the relationship which exists in The New Science between speculative pattern and historical event before turning to the text itself. A.R. Caponigri expresses it well.

> [There are in Vico] ideal and eternal history [speculative pattern] and the course of the nations in time [empirical course of events]. In reality, these are not two, but one. For the course of the nations in time fulfills within the limits of the time-forms of human culture the eternal and ideal history, while the latter, in turn, defines the immanent ideality of all time process. Their distinction can only be formal and dialectical. The science [The New Science] which embraces them does so in their unity and distinction and must be, consequently, philosophy and history at once; or more truly, since philosophy and history have always, in western tradition, stood in dialectical opposition to each other, a 'New Science' indeed. (1)

This seems to indicate that in The New Science the "ideal and eternal history" is not speculative at all; but rather that it has an empirical existence within "the course of the nations in time". However as we now proceed to describe this "ideal

(1) Caponigri, A.R., op.cit., p.109.

and eternal history" it will be seen that it is not found within empirical history so much as it is rather arbitrarily abstracted from Greco-Roman history, and then imposed on history in general.

With this background let us now turn to Vico himself for a statement of the purpose of Book IV, "The Course of Nations".

> ...we shall now, by the aid of this philosophical and philological illumination [of the preceeding sections of The New Science], and relying on the Axioms above stated concerning the ideal eternal history, in this fourth book discuss the course the nations take, proceeding in all their various and diverse customs with constant uniformity upon the three ages which the Egyptians said had elapsed before them in their world, namely, the successive ages of gods, heroes and men. For the nations will be seen to develop in conformity with this division by a constant and uninterrupted order of causes and effects present in every nation, through three kinds of natures. From these natures arise three kinds of customs; and in virtue of these customs three kinds of natural laws of nations are observed; and in consequence of these laws three kinds of civil states or commonwealths are established...These [groups of] three special unities, with many others that derive from them and will also be enumerated in this book, all lead to one general unity. This is the unity of the religion of a provident divinity, which is the unity of the spirit informing and giving life to this world of nations. (1)

Vico is saying here that there are three ages which all nations must pass through; and in Book V he adds that if a nation is destroyed by its decadence, then if it rises again it will once more pass through these same three stages. These three ages are characterized as that of the gods, of heroes and

(1) par. 915.

of men; and each age has its appropriate customs, laws, government etc. This position is qualified by saying that traces of one age may persist into the following age.(1) In order to give this speculative historical pattern on "philosophy of history" some substance we will briefly characterize each of these three ages.

The first age is the age of the gods. In this age men are impelled by necessity, they are crude in nature, and hugh and grotesque in appearance "like the cyclopes". The government was that of the family state.(2) The fathers of these families grew more powerful as the "impious and unchaste" peoples who wandered the land placed themselves under the protection of these fathers. In this age the people "feel without observing"(3), and their wisdom is "pre-reflective", "poetic" and creative. As the name of the age indicates, there was a pervasive sense of a relation to the divine expressed in terms of fables.

The second age is that of the heroes. In this age men are impelled by utility, severe in nature, "proud and magnanimous, like Achilles". The government was that of aristocratic commonwealths based upon a union of families and their adherents. In this age men "observe with a troubled and agitated spirit"(4);

(1) pars. 249, 1004-1006.
(2) pars. 241-245.
(3) par. 218.
(4) par. 218.

their language was one of "heroic blazonings, with which arms are made to speak"; and law was one of force but controlled by religion.(1)

The third age is that of men. Included in this is Vico's own age. In this age men are impelled by comfort; are benign in nature; and are marked by intelligence;—"they reflect with a clear mind." The most characteristic government is the constitutional monarchy.(2) Men recognize for laws: conscience, reason and duty.(3)

When the constitutional monarchy has been established in the third age, then we have once more the unity which existed in the beginning in the person of the family father, and the course of history is complete. This unity is the term of "ideal and eternal history", and it has been led to this unity by a "provident divinity" which is immanent in the historical process. Vico also speaks of this as "the unity of the spirit informing and giving life to this world of nations."(4)

Before commenting on this "philosophy of history" we will go on and describe the very short Book V, since it is an integral part of Vico's "philosophy of history".

(1) pars. 917, 920, 923, 926, 939, 949 et passim.
(2) Vico does not describe this monarchy as "constitutional", but the concept of monarchy which he has in mind approximates a constitutional monarchy. Cf. par. 953.
(3) pars. 918, 921, 924, 927, 940, et passim.
(4) par. 915.

In Book V, "The Recurrence of Human Things in the Resurgence of Nations", Vico claims to see in what we call the Middle Ages the recurrence of the barbarism of the first centuries of Greece and Rome. He goes on to say that more is known of the first barbarism than the second; an evaluation which was probably correct in the 18th Century, deeply alienated as it was from the Middle Ages by the impact of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. Finally, Vico believes that the returned barbaric times (the Middle Ages) are made more intelligible by a comparison with the first barbarism of early Greece and Rome.(1) Among the similarities which Vico sees between the two barbarisms is that of the joining of political-military power with religious sanction(2); the granting of asylum to the weak by the strong(3); and the arising again of a system of fiefs(4).

At the end of Book V Vico leaves the subject of the recurrence of human things and returns to the broader aspects of his "philosophy of history". He says: "Today a complete humanity seems to be spread abroad through all nations, for a

(1) This is the clear implication of pars. 1047ff; and not the opposite (i.e., that the Middle Ages clarify early Greece and Rome) which Collingwood states is the case (The Idea of History, p.67). In An Autobiography Collingwood warns us that philosophers often do not say what their commentators say they do!

(2) pars. 1048 - 1049.

(3) par. 1056.

(4) pars. 1057 - 1058; Cf. pars. 260 - 262.

few great monarchs rule over this world of peoples."(1) Thus they have returned to the unity of the family fathers, and their development is at an end; unless, that is, they sink into decadence and ruin. He then proceeds to mention the nations which do not fit very well into this "philosophy of history". These include Russia, Poland, England, Japan, various free cities and the Indians of North America! In addition Holland, Switzerland and the German empire seem to form a special, non-conforming group.(2) After this there is a final restatement of his thesis of "the ideal of the eternal laws in accordance with which the affairs of all nations proceed", and the fifth and final Book ends.

The inadequacies of any "philosophy of history" become obvious in Book V. The first of these is the tendency to see one's own age as the culmination of the historical process. This is, as we have mentioned, Vico's position. As we view this position in the 20th Century its error is too obvious to need comment.

Another and more serious error in any "philosophy of history" is that once the philosophy of principles have been established, then there is the problem of forcing the actual historical evidence into the prepared mould. Vico could not do it as is evident in the final part of Book V where he must list the

(1) par. 1089.

(2) pars. 1088 - 1095.

embarassingly long list of nations which do not conform to the pattern. In our own day Toynbee has the same difficulty in getting theory and evidence to coincide.(1) The inevitable result therefore of any "philosophy of history" is that to one degree or another historical evidence is modified in order to accord with the particular theory, i.e., history is falsified.

This conflict of theory and historical evidence is also evident in Book IV where Vico compares the first and second barbarism, i.e., the early centuries of Greece and Rome with the Middle Ages. In doing this Vico undoubtedly illuminated certain aspects of the Middle Ages for his contemporaries. However, if this comparison is taken as anything more than suggestive, then it becomes misleading. For example there was the historical factor of the presence of Christianity in the second barbarism. This factor alone would render misleading anything more than a suggestive parallel between the two periods.

In justice to Vico it should be repeated that his "philosophy of history" is not inflexible in its details. We have already mentioned that characteristics of one age may carry over into the next, e.g., heroic characteristics may appear in the age of man. Moreover when evidence simply will not fit the

(1) Cf. Geyl, P., Debates With Historians, B.T. Batsford, London, 1955. In a series of essays in this book Geyl takes Toynbee to task for tailoring his evidence to suit his theories.

theory at all, then, as we saw in our review of Book V, Vico admits it. He also states that the later barbarisms have a different quality from the primitive ones, calling the later barbarisms "barbarisms of reflection", i.e., that elements of their fallen civilization are present within the returned barbaric times.(1)

It is on the strength of Vico's statement as to the different quality of the returning times (the new cycles) that some critics see in Vico's "philosophy of history" a spiral movement, i.e., ever ascending cycles. Possibly, but there is really not enough evidence to say. The New Science does not indicate that Vico thought in terms of circles, spirals, lines etc. However, three very general comments can be made here. First, the concept of returning cycles shows an affinity with Greek views of time. This is to be expected because of the great influence which Greco-Roman civilization exerted upon Vico. Secondly and more problematically, the concept of returning cycles indicates in Vico an unrecognized alienation from Christian thought about history; which, whatever else it might be, is never that of returning cycles.(2) Thirdly, and

(1) A modern example of what Vico had in mind here can be seen in the neo-paganism of the Nazi movement in Germany. (However contrived it was, it nevertheless found many people responsive.) But it was not really "paganism", for it carried within it a defiance of many aspects of what we may conveniently call "Western civilization." It was a "paganism of reflection".

(2) The compatability of The New Science with Christian thought will be dealt with at greater length when we come to deal with Vico's concept of providence.

here we are on firm ground, whatever are the merits of an interpretation which sees a circular or spiral course of history in Vico, certainly there is no clear indication in him that history is perpetually progressive. Once the age of man is achieved no further improvement is expected. This last statement is really all that is essential here.

This concludes our survey of the broad outlines of the amorphous structure of The New Science, along with some indication of its content and the value of this content. We have seen something of Vico's presuppositions and methodology as presented in the "axioms" of Book I. These consist largely of observations on human nature and ways of thinking, and the observation and analysis of mythology, laws and the writings of Greek and Roman authors. In Book II ("Poetic Wisdom") this methodology was applied to earliest times. Vico's thesis here is that the earliest wisdom of men is "poetic" (imaginative, pre-reflective, concrete, fabulous etc.). In Book III ("The Discovery of the True Homer") this methodology and insight is applied to the problem of the authorship of the Iliad and Odyssey. Finally in Books IV and V ("The Course of Nations" and "The Recurrence of Human Things") we see that there are three ages; that of the gods, of the heroes and of men. This is the ideal and eternal history traversed (and possibly re-traversed) by all nations in the course of time.

This outline, then, will serve as a background for a more detailed discussion of certain aspects of Vico's work which are the particular concern of this thesis. These are: Vico's theory of knowledge; his understanding of the relation of philosophy and history; his conception of divine providence; and his methodology for dealing with historical evidence. We now turn to the first of these.

3. Vico's Theory of Knowledge.

a. Man can only know that which he has made.

Negatively, The New Science arose in opposition to Descartes and the atmosphere of rationalism which Descartes' influence had brought about.(1) This came about in spite of the fact that Vico was a Cartesian until his fortieth year. Positively, The New Science grew out of Vico's own historical studies, in the course of which he came to see that Cartesian thought gave no basis for history.

Vico's clear break with Cartesianism came with the publication of Ancient Wisdom of the Italians (1710). There he admits that the cogito ergo sum does establish the existence of the self, but that it is only the certainty of simple consciousness. And the related criterion which makes science possible, namely the clear and distinct perception, is likewise the certainty of

(1) Concerning the influence of Descartes at this time see The Autobiography of Giambattista Vico, p.132.

simple consciousness. But this is not a satisfactory criterion for scientific statement, for one may believe very firmly an entirely false idea. Moreover Descartes' criterion completely eliminates the possibility of history, for the data of history are never clearly and distinctly perceived. Rather what is needed, says Vico, is a basis for determining the limits of human knowledge; what we can and cannot know.

There is another way of stating why Descartes' philosophy is of little value as far as history is concerned. This is the fact that Descartes starts out with a problem which does not arise in the study of history; namely the problem of scepticism, the problem of the relation between ideas and things. The historian as historian does not write about this problem, nor is he interested in it, nor should he be. R.G. Collingwood commenting on this matter says:

> History is a kind of knowledge in which questions about ideas and questions about facts are not distinguishable; and the whole point of Descartes's philosophy consists in distinguishing those two types of questions. (1)

Let us put this in concrete terms. The historian's ideas about, say, the American Civil War are nothing else than the facts of that war seen, as far as is possible, as an organic whole. The interpretation or "ideas" of the historian arise out of this matrix of historical fact or evidence (battles,

(1) The Idea of History, p.66.

treaties, production figures etc.), and are checked at every point by this same evidence. In turn, as the historian's interpretations grow out of the investigation of evidence, these interpretations help to illuminate and at times even correct the factual record. Because this is so, the Cartesian separation of fact or evidence from interpretation or "idea" is a question which does not arise in history. They go together and the one is meaningless without the other. Vico was among the first, if not the first, to understand this intimate and necessary relation of fact (evidence) and interpretation (idea) in history. Therefore, a basis for history is not to be found in Descartes' philosophy, but by determining what can be known historically.

Vico finds this basis, in the Ancient Wisdom of the Italians, in the doctrine that the ability to really understand anything, as opposed to just perceiving it, is to have made it. He writes:

> The rule and criterion of truth is to have made it. Hence the clear and distinct idea of the mind not only cannot be the criterion of other truths, but it cannot be the criterion of the mind itself; for while the mind apprehends itself, it does not make itself, and because it does not make itself it is ignorant of the form or mode by which it apprehends itself. (1)

Vico goes on to say that God knows all things since he is their creator. (A discussion of the adequacy or usefulness of this analogical statement need not detain us). The mathema-

(1) Ancient Wisdom of the Italians, as quoted by Fisch and Bergin in the "Introduction" to The Autobiography of Giambattista Vico, p.38.

tician can be said to know because he is dealing in terms of abstractions which he has himself created. He could perceive a triangle, for example, without creating it; but if the triangle is known mathematically it is because man has created it and the individual mathematician can recreate it. Furthermore, and this was the conclusion in which Vico was particularly interested, man may know history because history is the creation of man. (The application of this line of thought to the field of history was developed after the publication of the Ancient Wisdom of the Italians.) The formula under which this theory of historical knowledge is usually discussed is verum et factum convertuntur,(1) i.e., the condition of knowing anything (verum) is that the knower himself should have created it (factum).

This theory of historical knowledge is both highly original and far-reaching in its implications. When we describe it as highly original this, of course, does not mean that Vico created it ex nihilo. Robert Flint, after examining the various possible sources of Vico's theory, including several minor figures of Vico's own day, writes:

> Whatever the theory may be, it is not of a commonplace character; true or false, it is not one which an ordinary mind would originate. It occurred to no thinker before Vico, and rests on a bold and singular conception, which could only have suggested itself to a man who looked at philosophical problems altogether in a way of his own. (2)

(1) Although the phrase verum et factum convertuntur has the appearance of a philosophical "tag", this does not in fact seem to be the case. It would seem to be more likely that it represents Vico's own reworking of such well-known "tags" as verum et bonum convertuntur (e.g., Summa Theologica, 1:16:4) and ens et verum convertuntur (e.g., Summa Theologica, 1:16:3).

(2) Flint, op.cit., p.93.

The far-reaching implications of this theory warrant some discussion. The insight that history is knowledge of that which man has made led Vico to see the historical process as one in which men build up systems of language, laws, government etc. Thinking back to our discussion of the structure of The New Science, we can see at work there this understanding of man building up these systems in the course of history. This is especially evident in Book IV with its analysis of the ages of the gods, heroes and men; an analysis which presents man as actually creating himself as man in the course of history. Concerning this dynamic, constructive process whereby man realizes his possibilities, Collingwood writes:

> Here we reach for the first time a completely modern idea of what the subject-matter of history is. There is no antithesis between the isolated actions of men and the divine plan which holds them together, as there was for the Middle Ages; and, on the other hand, there is no suggestion that primitive man...foresaw what was going to come of the developments he was initiating; the plan of history is a wholly human plan, but it does not pre-exist in the shape of an unrealized intention to its own gradual realization. Man is no mere demiurge, fashioning human society as Plato's God fashions the world on an ideal model; like God Himself, he is a real creator, bringing into existence both form and matter together in the corporate work of his own historical development. The fabric of human society is created by man out of nothing, and every detail of this fabric is therefore a human factum, eminently knowable to the human mind as such.(1)

In all this we see that there is an insight into the nature of history in The New Science which outweighs all of its fantasies,

(1) The Idea of History, p.65.

careless etymologizing and arbitrary division of history into "ages".

There is another implication in Vico's theory of historical knowledge which, although he never formulates it in so many words, is found throughout The New Science. It is this: Since history is the creation of man, and since the historian is a man, history therefore can be reconstructed by the historian as he recreates that history in his own mind. We see this process at work most clearly in the etymological analysis of various primitive words. The carelessness or lack of control with which this is done does not invalidate the procedure as such. The ability to reconstruct historical events is also implied in many of the "axioms", and particularly in those which lay down how the human mind operates. For example: "Because of the indefinite nature of the human mind, wherever it is lost in ignorance, man makes himself the measure of all things."(1) This "axiom" is one which could be used in the analysis of an historical statement to show how its author projected his own ignorance upon a situation, i.e., through the process of rethinking or recreating the historical statement it can be shown that it is in fact a projection of its author's ignorance upon an unknown historical situation. In speaking of his method Vico says that it has been his effort "To discover the way in which this first human thinking arose in the gentile world..."(2), i.e., an effort to recon-

(1) par. 120.

(2) par. 338.

struct, largely in terms of etymology, that thinking.

As we should expect, Vico did not work this theory out satisfactorily in all of its details. When we return to it in Croce and Collingwood we will see the need of greater documentary control in historical reconstruction. Vico also underestimated the part imagination, properly understood and controlled, plays in historical reconstruction —— including his own. Vico restricts imagination to "extended or compounded memory".(1) Imagination is this, but such a limited conception restricts its dynamic and creative possibilities.

Another unsatisfactory aspect of Vico's thinking here is that he posits "a mental language common to all nations", including those separated in time.(2) This would seem to imply a common human nature. To debate this as a formal proposition would be an abstract, academic and insoluble endeavour. The conditions under which and the extent to which the historian may imaginatively reconstruct a specific historical event and share "a mental language common" with the participants in that event will be discussed in our treatment of Croce and Collingwood.

b. The Relation of Philosophy and History.

We now turn to an explicit consideration of an aspect of Vico's theory of knowledge which has been implicit in the foregoing discussion. This is the relation of philosophy and history

(1) par. 211.

(2) par. 161.

in Vico's thought. Vico and most of his commentators discuss this relationship largely in terms of the verum and the certum. Concerning the verum (the true) Vico says: "Philosophy contemplates reason, whence comes knowledge of the true;..."(1) When Vico speaks of the verum he means the result of the philosophical process. Therefore in the following discussion we will, in the interest of clarity, speak in terms of "philosophy" rather than "the verum".

When we turn to the other side of this pair of concepts it is even more evident that we need a translation into other terms. The certum (the certain) is for Vico everything that has been made by man, i.e. the factum. That which man knows (the certum) is and can only be that which man has made (the factum). The factum is convertible with the certum of history.(2) Its investigation is the province of the philologist.

> ...philologians [are] all the grammarians, historians, critics, who have occupied themselves with the study of the languages and deeds of peoples: both their domestic affairs, such as customs and laws, and their external affairs, such as wars, peaces, alliances, travels and commerce. (3)

It is evident from this that the realm of the philologist and the certum is very inclusive; it includes the study of the

(1) par. 138.

(2) Cf. Caponigri, A.R., op. cit., pp. 148ff. This gives an extended discussion of the relationship of certum and factum.

(3) par. 139.

"language and deeds of peoples", all that man has made. The modern and comprehensive term for those whose subject this is, is that of "historian"; and the subject, "history". The certum is for us the products and events of history; or more simply, just history.(1) Therefore in the following discussion we will speak in terms of history and the historian rather than in terms of the certum and the philologist.

With this definition of the verum and the certum, and its redefinition as philosophy and history, let us examine Vico's view as to the relation which should exist between them. He writes:

> ...the philosophers failed by half in not giving certainty to their reasonings by appeal to the authority of the philologians, and likewise ... the [philologians] failed by half in not taking care to give their authority the sanction of truth by appeal to the reasoning of philosophers. If they had both done this they would have been more useful to their commonwealths and they would have anticipated us in conceiving this Science. (2)

Philosophy should be informed by philology (history). This summarizes the first half of the above quotation. Vico was first led to this position by his effort to find a theoretical basis for civil law. He found among his predecessors and contemporaries in this effort that they attempted to find such

(1) The term "history" always has some ambiguity. It is either; (a) a study or process of investigation; (b) it is the result of such study; (c) the events of history. The particular use is usually defined by the context.

(2) par. 140.

a basis without having any recourse to history; without the critical study of the appropriate documents and conditions of the earlier societies in which systems of law arose. As a result their 18th Century rationalistic viewpoint was read back into ancient history, e.g., the social contract view of society, the assumption that ancient society possessed men of "matchless wisdom" who thought in abstract and complicated terms as they themselves did, the assumption that the "horrible religions" of the ancients which had such a pervasive influence over their lives was cunningly contrived by priests to serve their own end etc. The result was a tissue of errors in which they were the captives of their 18th Century point-of-view; that point-of-view being read back into preceeding centuries.(1) Against all of this Vico contends that these errors could be avoided by the critical study of the laws of these former societies, i.e., by the study of history. If this contention seems commonplace, it is because it has become so widely accepted.

In the course of his studies Vico came to broaden the context of his inquiries to include not only the history and development of law, but also of the total development of society. As we have seen, this means for Vico all that man has made; his language, customs, forms of government etc. This is the content of history or the certum. Here, as in the more restricted study of the development of law, the same principle applies,

(1) par. 663 et passim.

i.e., any theory and pattern of development must be controlled by the critical study of those actual developments. "The nature of things is nothing but their coming into being (nascimento) at certain times and in certain fashions."(1) Or again, "Doctrines must take their beginning from [the beginnings] of the matters of which they treat."(2) If this is not done then a theory or philosophy (e.g., the social contract theory of society) will be inserted into ancient Greece or some other period.

To follow this programme was the task which Vico set himself. As we have seen, he often had very limited success in accomplishing this task. The reason for this was in large part that the contemporary body and technique of historical investigation was not adequate to this task. However there is another reason; namely the fact that he did not follow his own theory consistently. His most serious error is in Books IV and V of The New Science where he describes the ideal and eternal order (the ages of gods, heroes and men) through which the nations pass and possibly repass in the course of time. There we saw, especially in the long list of nations which Vico admits do not fit into his theory, that the historical evidence did not conform to his philosophical theory. This being the case, his

(1) par. 147.

(2) par. 314.

own theory should have warned him that something was wrong; that he should have modified his theory, as Croce suggests, into the much more general form of a movement of the nations from a spontaneous and prereflective stage to a reflective stage. Thus it is that Vico's most serious error, as compared with many minor errors of fact and of carelessness, resulted from not consistently following his "axiom" that history and philosophy must complement one another.

We will return to this whole question of the necessity of history informing philosophy when we come to deal with Croce and Collingwood. In particular we will discuss whether areas of philosophical investigation other than those mentioned here need to be informed by history. Our contention will be that they do need to be so informed.

Philology (history) should be informed by philosophy. This statement summarizes the second half of the quotation from Vico which is under discussion here. (In discussion this second half of this quotation we will be, rather obviously, approaching the same problem from a different direction.) Vico means by this two related but distinguishable things. We will discuss these in turn.

That history should be informed by philosophy (the verum) means first of all that the events or content of history which man has made (the certum, i.e., the factum) cannot be approached as

purely objective fact; as something "out there". (Even in the exact sciences the data are not approached in a purely objective manner.) Rather the events of history must be rationally and critically rethought or remade, insofar as possible, as did those persons who first thought or made those same events (battle, treaty, painting etc.). The events must be seen in their original context. In other words, there must be an imaginative and critical examination of historical data; and the moulding of this data by means of language or thought into a logical and coherent historical picture.

In time this understanding of history was to bring about a revolution in the writing of history. In the opinion of Collingwood, which we have already quoted, the modern conception of history as a critical and constructive process emerges with Vico; and it was this understanding of a history informed by philosophy which played the greatest part in bringing about this revolution.

> History ceases to be Cicero's "storehouse of the countless lessons of the past," Augustine's mixed career of the two cities, the medieval roll-call of saints and sinners, heroes and villains, Machiavelli's repertory of models for a wise prince's imitation, Bossuet's epiphany of a kind of celestial Louis XIV, Bayle's register of atomic doubt-resistant fact, or Bolingbroke's "philosophy teaching by examples." It is not embarrassed by the failure of peoples and governments to learn anything from it, since it has nothing to teach but history. (1)

With Vico history ceases to be these things; or better, the gradual elimination of these misunderstandings is begun. As we

(1) The Autobiography of Giambattista Vico, pp. 46-47 of the "Introduction" by Fisch and Bergin.

shall see in dealing with Croce and Collingwood, these men writing in the 20th Century still found it necessary to oppose the misconception of history as chronicle, as moral tale, as glorification of party or hero etc.

That history should be informed by philosophy means yet a second thing for Vico. It means in the second place that the course or history of the nations in time cannot be approached intelligibly apart from the ideal and eternal history of those nations. This ideal and eternal history we have already examined in the course of our discussion. We have also already discussed the error it leads to, namely, forcing empirical history into the mould of an arbitrary ideal and eternal history.

Thus there is an ambiguity in Vico's "axiom" which calls for history to be informed by philosophy. On the one hand it means the critical and constructive examination of historical data; and on the other hand the approach to historical data by means of an ideal and eternal history which all nations are supposed to follow. How did Vico come to hold such contradictory ideas about the way in which philosophy was to inform history? It was because he believed that through the critical and constructive examination of history he had discovered an ideal and eternal history; and that this history could then be projected upon all possible history. Or to put it more as Vico would have, any critical and contructive examination of historical data will

reveal an empirical pattern which follows his ideal and eternal history.

If Vico was a good guide in overcoming the misconceptions of history as chronicle, heroic story, moral tale etc.; he was of little help in overcoming another misconception, namely, that of history as the "philosophy of history". And as we might expect, it is this last misconception of history which is the most tenacious. Chronicles are no longer read except as curosities and as an aid to research; but "philosophy of history", such as that of Marx or Toynbee, continues to have a wide hearing. These "philosophies of history", like that of Vico, are in the last analysis a failure because they impose an ideal pattern on empirical fact. "The human mind is naturally impelled to take delight in uniformity."(1), and so it continues to be.

4. Vico's Understanding of Divine Providence.

In our discussion of the structure of The New Science, and especially Books IV and V, we have described the ideal and eternal course of history which specific nations are supposed to follow. In the subsequent discussion of Vico's theory of knowledge we have described the basic principles whereby we arrive at histor-

(1) par. 204.

ical knowledge of the nations as they develop. However there is one further major elaboration of this understanding of history; one to which Vico returns again and again. This elaboration has to do with the direction of the history of the nations in time. He maintains that it is directed not by an inexorable "chain of cause and effect" as the Stoics maintain; nor by "a blind concourse of atoms" (fate) as the Epicureans maintain.(1) Rather it is directed by divine providence. This providence is immanent rather than transcendent. He writes:

> In all [the conditions of men from the bestial to that of highly developed nations] man desires principally his own utility. Therefore it is only by divine providence that he can be held within these orders to practice justice as a member of the society of the family, the state, and finally of mankind. Unable to attain all the utilities he wishes, he is constrained by these orders to seek those which are his due; and this is called just. That which regulates all human justice is therefore divine justice, which is administered by divine providence to preserve human society. (2)

In other words this divine providence is, unknown to man usually, at work in the historical process. Its purpose is to rectify those negative actions of men which would turn their nature back into earlier and destructive channels; and thus it works for man's own larger good. It is because of this divine providence that empirical history coincides with the ideal and eternal history, i.e., divine providence is a corrective within

(1) par. 342.

(2) par. 341.

the historical process insuring its ideal and eternal direction of movement. (In Hegel this same process is called the "cunning of reason", and other writers have other terms for it.) The strictly immanental character of this providence is seen in the following passage.

> Since divine providence has omnipotence as minister, it developes its orders by means as easy as the natural customs of men. Since it has infinite wisdom as counselor, whatever it establishes is order. Since it has for its end its own immeasurable goodness, whatever it ordains must be directed to a good always superior to that which men have proposed to themselves. (1)

It is this immanent divine providence which The New Science demonstrates.

> Our new Science must therefore be a demonstration, so to speak, of the historical fact of providence, for it must be a history of the forms of order which, without human discernment or intent, and often against the designs of men, providence has given to this great city of the human race. For though this world has been created in time and particular, the orders established therein by providence are universal and eternal. (2)

On the basis of this Vico says that The New Science "must therefore be a rational civil theology of divine providence".(3) This means it will be rational and not revealed; and it is to be a civil (treating of history) and not a natural theology. Formerly, Vico goes on, the demonstration of divine providence has always proceeded from an examination of the natural order.

(1) par. 343

(2) par. 342.

(3) par. 342.

"But they ought to have studied it in the economy of civil things..." (1) This understanding of providence fits naturally into Vico's total position which is that which man can know is history (the certum) because he has made it (the factum).

This then is an indication of Vico's conception of the nature of divine providence in the course of history. One aspect of this understanding which has given Vico's commentators cause for discussion is whether it is an immanent or transcendent view of providence. Because of the concerns and direction of this thesis we must also turn to this problem.

The first thing that comes to mind is, as we have already stated in our introductory remarks on Vico, that Vico explicitly excludes from The New Science any real treatment of divine or Hebrew history. His views on Hebrew history conformed to the traditional theology of his time, and this would include a clearly transcendent view of providence. Whatever was the thought and motive behind this arbitrary separation of Hebrew and gentile history, it is of no help to us. We cannot seriously entertain the view that Hebrew society and its early religion developed in one way, and that all others developed in a radically different way. Insofar as Vico's insight into the development of nations is valid, then it is applicable to Hebrew society too. (The change from pre-reflective to relatively reflective thought forms is writ large throughout

(1) par. 342.

the Old Testament.) Moreover, in spite of Vico's undoubtedly genuine piety, one cannot help but feel that it is only the history of the "gentile" nations which has any genuine reality for him. For these reasons we will confine our discussion of Vico's understanding of providence to those views set forth in The New Science concerning the "gentile" nations.

Croce maintains that Vico's understanding of providence is purely immanental; divine providence is another name for the "rationality of history".

> History then is the work neither of Fate nor of Chance but of the necessity which is not determination and the liberty which is not chance. And since the religious view, that history is the work of God, has this advantage and superiority over the others, that it introduces a cause for history other than fate or chance, and therefore properly speaking not a cause at all, but a creative activity, a free and intelligent mind, it is natural that out of gratitude to this higher view no less than by suitability of the language we should be led to give to the rationality of history the name of God who rules and governs all things, and to call it Divine Providence. (1)

This position is in line with Croce's total philosophy in which he is often at pains to remove any idea of the transcendent from life. Moreover there is much in Vico which supports Croce's interpretation, e.g., "... [providence] developes its orders by means as easy as the natural customs of men."(2) Of course, as Vico's position is put by Croce, providence is not

(1) Croce, B., The Philosophy of Giambattista Vico, p.116

(2) par. 343.

the Divine immanent within the historical process; rather it is that process itself working itself out creatively and rationally. The historical process is the expression of nothing but itself. In all this Croce is certainly right in rejecting the view that divine providence operates by arbitrarily breaking into the natural order.

Another interpretation of Vico's understanding of providence is developed by A. Robert Caponigri who asserts that "the immanence of the transcendent is the central principle of [Vico's] historicism and the whole meaning of his doctrine of providence."(1) Caponigri maintains, in support of this "immanence of transcendence", that when Vico speaks of the immanence of providence he does not thereby exclude all transcendental reference.

> At the same time, there is no indication in Vico's thought of the radical immanentism of historicism, for he nowhere indicates that the presence which he demominated by the term providence is such that it exhausts itself in the temporal process of which it is the principle. Even less does he suggest that the temporal process is the process of the self-generation of that principle, as an immanentistic historicism must conclude. (2)

However pedantically Caponigri manages to express himself, the fact remains that this is a quite legitimate estimate of Vico's thought on providence as it is expressed in The New Science. A reference back to any of the quotations from Vico

(1) Caponigri, op. cit., p.107.

(2) ibid., p. 107.

in this section will indicate that Caponigri's position is fully defensible. And while admitting the ambiguity here, we wish to aline ourselves with this interpretation.

On the other hand it is arguable that Croce and similar critics understand Vico better than Vico understands himself, and that Vico's understanding of providence really does exclude any and all transcendental reference. The evidence as contained in The New Science is simply not sufficient to argue this matter conclusively one way or the other. Hence the divergent views of the two very competent critics quoted above. This situation indicates that, for whatever reason, Vico did not see a problem here.

The problem of the Divine acting in history is one which we will return to at several points in the following chapters. When we do so it will be seen that the idea of the "immanence of transcendence" will commend itself to us. Whether this is really Vico's view, or whether The New Science only leaves itself open to this interpretation, is not of crucial importance. The important question to be decided is whether or not this interpretation commends itself to us as a formulation of how God works in the course of history.

Since we will be returning to this general problem of God's action in history, I want to briefly anticipate our later discussion. It is certainly the case that the Christian misses

in Vico any convincing statement of the importance of the divine reality which stands behind the providence which manifests itself in history. This is the case in spite of the fact that Vico deals with history which has taken place in the Christian era; in which era, from the Christian point-of-view, the "old Israel" had been changed into the "new Israel" of the Christian Church. Hence Vico's arbitrary and never satisfactory compartmentalizing of history into Hebrew ("divine") history and gentile ("civil") history completely breaks down. But, having recognized this inadequacy in Vico, it is nevertheless evident that The New Science is of great help to us when we come to ask certain questions about history. For example, what possible meaning can we attach to a strictly transcendent view of God's action in history? Or, how can God possibly guide or help men apart from secondary causes and the events of history? Such a position would necessitate God breaking into the natural order when He wishes to manifest His will. And this leads us to ask: Is the natural order really so foreign to God?

Conversely, the understanding of a transcendent providence immanently expressed seems compatable with, and even demanded by, such events as the Exodus. At the very least the historical factors of oppression in Egypt, migration, and fighting for the possession of a new home were of the utmost importance in determining that the revelation connected with the Exodus would take place; and also in conditioning the form and content of that revelation. Here we see God acting through His natural

order. We say "acting through", for it does not follow that because the events of history (secondary causes) are of the utmost importance in determining revelation, that transcendental reference is thereby excluded.

5. The Writing of History.

In this survey of Vico's understanding of the theory and writing of history it only remains briefly to summarize his contribution to the actual process of the writing of history. Everything we say here is based on the foregoing discussion. We will ignore those aspects of Vico's effort which we have had to reject.

The first and most important contribution was to show that history is more than the compiling of chronicles or even the critical study of documents. He demonstrated that it was possible to reconstruct historical periods, and to give some indication of their development. In addition, this reconstruction of the characteristics of a period enabled him to argue analogically from one period to a later and similar period, e.g., our knowledge of the early centuries of Greece and Rome can be used analogically to arrive at knowledge of the similar period of the Middle Ages. The crudity with which this programme was carried out does not invalidate its great achievement.

The second contribution was the formulation of a set of principles of historical interpretation which arose partly from the study of history and partly from the observation of the

way in which human thinking proceeds. These principles or "axioms" include the understanding of the recurrent habit of attributing magnificence to antiquity; the fact that nations paint their history in the most favourable colours; the tendency to attribute to the ancients greater wisdom than they actually possessed etc.

A third contribution was the demonstration that the analysis of language, myth, customs, traditions etc. will yield historical information which is not contained in their explicit content.(1)

Much of this seems obvious to us today because it has come to be commonly accepted. However, in its historical context it was potentially revolutionary for the writing of history; a fact which helps to explain why its actual acceptance and application was delayed for several generations.

6. Summary and Prospect.

We have not dealt with all aspects of The New Science. Among the major ommissions are details of what might be called Vico's doctrine of man, and also of his "philosophy of history". In both cases the reason for the omission is that it is not relevant to the problem of this thesis, and that its content is so problematical. However we have found in Vico several important and highly interrelated contributions to the understanding of history which commend themselves to us, and to which

(1) I am indebted to R.G. Collingwood (The Idea of History, pp. 68-71) for help in distinguishing Vico's main contributions here.

we will be making reference in the following chapters. Let us concisely summarize them.

The first of these is the "axiom": "Doctrines must take their beginnings from [the beginnings] of the matters of which they treat." In the study of the beginning of anything we come to know its nature. "The nature of things is nothing but their coming into being (nascimento) at certain times and in certain fashions." This implies that doctrines or philosophy (the verum) must not be separated from their historical beginnings (the certum). And of what can we know the beginnings? Only of that which man has made (the factum) and has left evidence of having made. In this we see that history (fact, event, the certum, the factum) goes hand-in-hand with philosophy (interpretation, the verum). If they are separated fact becomes mute, and interpretation becomes uncontrolled. This whole theory of knowledge is based upon the conviction that it is possible to reconstruct and imaginatively enter into these "beginnings".

A second contribution of Vico was to be among the first to point out the inadequacies of the Cartesian epistemology; and especially in its use as a basis of history. This critique of Descartes grew up side-by-side with the development of Vico's own theory of historical knowledge.

Vico also gave us a new conception of providence, one which has a strong note of immanence. We will return to the problem of the nature of God's action in history in the following

chapters, and in doing so we will take the position which is in accord with our interpretation of Vico; namely, of the immanence of transcendence.

Finally, on the basis of the above contributions, Vico made a contribution to the practice of the writing of history.

Due to the revolutionary nature of Vico's ideas concerning history, they remained for all practical purposes wrapped in obscurity until the latter part of the 19th Century. Even now the study of Vico remains undeservedly esoteric, usually being relegated to a few pages in specialized surveys of the writing of history. The principle writer who has striven to correct this situation is Benedetto Croce, and as we turn now to an examination of Croce we will recognize, in a more developed form, many ideas which we have already encountered in Vico.

Chapter III

CROCE'S UNDERSTANDING OF HISTORY

The following statement of Croce's understanding of history is drawn from three of his books. The first of these, entitled Theory and History of Historiography (Teoria e storia della storiografia),[1] was published in 1917. We will be drawing mainly on this work. The other two subsequent books, History as the Story of Liberty[2] and My Philosophy[3], consist of the application of the views in the first book to politics and other fields, and of replies to his critics.

Anyone attempting to make a study of Croce's thought is immediately faced with the problem of his style. There is throughout an arbitrary use of words. Among those which we will examine are: "empirical", which is used in contrast to a logical and critical progression of thought; "intuition", which turns out to be synonymous with imagination; "spirit", which cannot be discussed as such, but which is expressed in concrete acts of thought concerning truth, beauty, morality and utility. These and other terms to be examined are often used by Croce before they are explained. They present a difficulty because Croce has built his own peculiar meanings into them.

(1) Croce, Benedetto, Theory and History of Historiography, translated by D. Ainslie, George G. Harrap and Co. London, 1921.

(2) Croce, Benedetto, History as the Story of Liberty, translated by Sylvia Sprigge, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1921.

(3) Croce, Benedetto, My Philosophy, translated by E.F. Carritt, George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., London, 1949.

Another problem is the organization of Croce's writings. The greatest organization is to be found in the Theory and History of Historiography, although even here the reader is left to discover this organization for himself. The other two books under discussion are collections of essays held together more by a common theme than by a logical progression of thought. In short, Croce's work is characterized by a repeated treatment of a limited number of important themes as they appear in different contexts, e.g., the contemporaneity of history, the identity of history and philosophy, the relation of philology to history, the rejection of any notion of the transcendent from history and life etc.

One further matter should be mentioned before turning to the exposition of Croce's understanding of history. This is that his understanding of history has a definite and self-conscious relation to his total philosophy. This philosophy is a very comprehensive one embracing all areas of our experience. Because of this relationship I want to briefly adumbrate this total philosophy.

Croce affirms "the absolutely spiritual nature of reality". This reality he subsumes under four "eternal values or categories or activities of the spirit". These four are: truth, beauty, morality or goodness and utility. Each of these "in its operation presupposes the others, since all are necessary to the whole, and no one can claim a primacy that belongs only to the

whole cycle or to the spirit itself."(1) What part does philosophy have to play in this scheme? Philosophy "concerns itself with all these as they concern themselves with it". The relation of history to all of this is indicated in the words:

> ...history is philosophy in the concrete... history is the only judgment properly so called, and includes in itself philosophy, which is only living philosophy in history and as history. That is why, since I had to find a name for my edifice,... I preferred [to call it] 'absolute history'. (2)

Thus, in Croce's view history is concerned with all aspects of experience; aspects which he categorizes as truth, beauty, morality and utility. Our encounter with experience or reality always comes under one of the four categories, and it is always a concrete encounter; e.g., not with "beauty" in general but with the beauty of a particular painting. Furthermore, the process by which we are able to make the judgment that this particular painting is beautiful is an historical process. A fuller explanation of this last statement will have to wait until we have given a more complete exposition of Croce's thought in this whole area.

Let us turn to this exposition now. We will start by stating what, in Croce's opinion, history is not. The negative beginning is necessitated by the many misconceptions which everyone but the specialist brings to this subject. The ideas presented here will be further supported when we come to the positive

(1) My Philosophy, p. 18.
(2) ibid. p. 19.

exposition of Croce's thought.

1. History as Misconceived.

Before beginning this section it will be helpful if the terms which Croce uses in his polemic against false history are briefly explained. Croce is most emphatic that the "philosophy of history is not truly history. By this term he means the schematizing and judging of historical events in terms of a set of values derived from some area other than history, e.g., in terms of dialectical materialism.(1) Secondly, Croce maintains that history is not "chronicle", by which he means the listing of events in a chronological order; nor is it "philology", by which he means the refining and editing of chronicles, inscriptions and other documents Included here would be the description and dating of artifacts. Thirdly, history is misunderstood when it is presented as "universal history". By this term is meant the various attempts to present the whole sweep of history. This effort is objectionable for several reasons. The first and most obvious of these is the fact that prehistory, "dark ages" and the future must be filled in largely or entirely by means of speculation. "Universal history" is also illegitimate when it presents history from a particular point of view; the implication being that this is the interpretation of "universal history", e.g., Hegel's vision of

(1) See My Philosophy, pp. 64-67, for a concise and spirited statement on the falseness of the Communist "philosophy of history".

all history as culminating in the 19th Century Prussian state.(1) Finally, history is misunderstood when it is conceived as "poetical" or "rhetorical" history. By the former term Croce intends to designate those histories which are ruled by some particular sentiment, e.g., patriotism. The latter term, "rhetorical" history, refers to history ruled by the desire to teach a lesson, e.g., Communism is bad. Let us turn now to a full description of each of these misconceived histories.

a. History is not the "philosophy of history".

If an intelligent and well-formed person is told that a book is about history, but not about any <u>particular</u> historical subject, then he assumes that it concerns itself with what Croce calls the "philosophy of history". This term is an example of those terms which Croce uses in a rather special way, for by it he designates all of those systems which seek to understand the whole sweep of history and to predict the future in terms of a particular pattern. That this misconception should exist in the minds of many is only to be expected when we think of the large number of schemes or patterns which have been offered up in the name of history, e.g., dialectical materialism, progressive evolution patterned on biological evolution, Toynbee's idea of challenge and response, the various racialist theories, the schemes of Hegel, Spengler and many others. Of all these, Croce says they are misconceptions of

(1) <u>Cf. My Philosophy</u>, pp. 180-207, where the interconnection "universal history" and "philosophy of history" is evident.

history; they are not history at all; they belong to "the phenomenology of error".

How does Croce justify this indictment which has so many serious historians and philosophers as its target? He does it in this way. He maintains that the "philosophers of history" have taken it for granted that there are brute or meaningless facts to be discovered in the course of history. This assumption is their first step, and it is a false one. Their next step is to maintain that they "must confer...a 'meaning' [upon the brute facts] ... representing them as aspects of a transcendental process, a theophany."(1) Here "transcendental process" is used not in a narrowly theological sense, but in a functional sense; i.e., any historical process or goal which does not arise out of history but is rather imposed upon history and hence "transcends" history. For example, a racialist philosophy of history might maintain: a. the culture of negroid peoples is inferior to the culture of western European civilization (empirical fact); b. therefore negroid peoples are naturally inferior to those making up western European civilization (a pattern of meaning imposed upon empirical observation and not arising out of it). The concepts of natural superiority and inferiority of races do not arise out of the study of history; rather they are, so to speak, located in a transcendental realm of "self-evident truths". History must then be

(1) Theory and History of Historiography, p. 69.

read in order to support these "truths". "The void of logical thought" in this simple example of a "philosophy of history" is readily evident. In more complex examples, this defect is not so obvious; and especially is it not obvious when the "philosophy of history" in question purports to support a position with which we have traditional ties, e.g., liberty over totalitarianism, Christianity over paganism, democracy over Communism etc.(1)

Another way of expressing this is to say that, "the search for the transcendental end [of history] is the "philosophy of history"(2) To posit a meaning for history is also to posit the end. For example, in Marxism the "inner meaning" of history is the movement toward the classless society, and the end of history is that society.

A confusion which is often compounded with the above error is that which takes place "when classificatory representations ...[are] idealized". By this is meant that certain identifications (e.g., that between Greece and the liberty of the individual, or that between Rome and abstract generalizations) which have some basis in empirical observation, and which are possibly permissible in the interests of classifying material, are then taken to say something definitive about the subject under consideration. For example, to associate Rome with abstract generalizations may have a certain schematic value and can be historically supported;

(1) Cf. Theory and History of Historiography, pp. 68ff
(2) ibid p.67. Cf. pp. 84-85.

but to raise this convenient identification to the status of a statement about the "inner meaning" of Roman civilization is to impose a pre-conceived meaning on history and to create confusion.(1)

What is the net result of this approach to history?

> In this way we get a duality: on the one hand historical accounts constructed by way of criticism, on the other hand interpretations which lie beyond criticism being the result of revelation or of ulterior vision, of a faculty which cannot be described or find any relationship or harmony with the other faculties of the human spirit. (2)

In the light of this statement what is the Christian to say about the distinction which is often made, in various forms, between "history" and "holy history"? This is a problem which will reappear at several points in the following chapters, and which we will try to answer in the concluding section of this thesis. (3) (4)

b. History is neither chronicle nor philology.

The "philosophy of history" is an ambitious and grandéose effort, but one which is nevertheless a misconception of history.

(1) Cf. History as the Story of Liberty, pp. 140-146.

(2) ibid. p. 143. Italics mine.

(3) Croce makes an interesting demonstration that deterministic philosophies of history (e.g., Marxism) always end in transcendency. ibid. pp. 68ff. et passim. Since this demonstration is a working out of the implications of Croce's understanding of history rather than an addition to it, I do not propose to treat it further here.

(4) For a further discussion of the "philosophy of history" with special reference to Hegel see My Philosophy, pp.180-207.

On a much less exalted plane stands another misconception of history, namely that of chronicle and philology.

What is chronicle? Most simply stated, chronicle is the chronological ordering of a number of more or less related historical facts, e.g., the chronological ordering of the principal official acts of Henry, ~~the~~ VII. Such efforts are marked by two obvious qualities: the uncritical acceptance of the documents out of which the chronology is constructed, and the lack of any attempt to integrate the recorded events into a coherent historical picture. Such efforts are not without value, for "The moment will come when they will serve to reproduce past history..." But the chronicle is not itself history.

Croce's own critique of chronicle gives us a further indication of its inadequacies. An example which Croce gives is that of the history of Hellenic painting. In such a history what do we have to work with? A series of artists' names, some biographical anecdotes about them, the subjects of some of their paintings and the record of approval or disapproval which certain ancient authors passed upon these paintings. From this material the most that can be acheived is to arrange it in chronological order——to make a chronicle of it. No more is possible because we do not have the living documents, i.e., the paintings themselves. We know, for example, that they painted battles; and thus we might write <u>in general</u> about Apelles and the painting

of battles. However we can say nothing specifically and concretely about the battle scenes which Apelles painted.

> ...we can think indifferently of any one of the numerous facts that those names of the artists recall. For this reason their content is indeterminate, and this indetermination of content is their emptiness. (1)

Since such histories are empty they are without truth; they rest entirely upon the authority of others. When Croce says that chronicles are not true, he does not mean that they are false. It is just that they cannot say anything about the subject which is not empty; and it is their quality of emptiness, according to Croce, which renders them incapable of yielding truth. Hence, they are quite useless for our actual lives.

This type of history may be characterized on one level as disconnected, superficial and external. But Croce wants a more fundamental characterization and contrast to genuine history. He writes:

> The truth is that chronicle and history are not distinguishable as two forms of history, mutually complementary, or as one subordinate to the other, but as two different spiritual attitudes. History is living chronicle, chronicle is dead history; history is contemporary history, chronicle is past history; history is principally an act of thought, chronicle an act of will. Every history becomes chronicle when it is no longer thought, but only

(1) Theory and History of Historiography, p.17.

recorded in abstract words, which were once upon a time concrete and expressive. (1) (2)

If history is not chronicle, neither is it philology; the latter being a refinement of the former. Concerning philology Croce says with characteristic pungency:

> The ingenuous belief cherished by the philologists that they have history locked up in their libraries, museums and archives (something in the same manner as the genius of the Arabian Nights, who was shut up in a small vase in the form of compressed smoke) does not remain inactive, and gives rise to the idea of a history constructed with things, traditions, and documents (empty traditions and dead documents), and this affords an instance of what may be called philological history. (3)

The reason why philological history will not work is that history cannot be composed from external things, i.e., from objective, unthought facts.

> Chronicles that have been weeded, chopped up into fragments, recombined, rearranged, always remain nevertheless chronicles——that is to say, empty narratives; and documents that have been restored, reproduced, described, brought into line, remain documents——that is to say, silent things. (4)

(1) ibid., p. 19. Italics Croce's. See also pp. 23-24.

(2) Croce considers "the anecdote" to be a form of chronicle, and developes this idea on pp. 118-126 of History as the Story of Liberty. This is a working out of an element of his thought already implicit in the material just considered, and therefore we will not deal with it here.

(3) Theory and History of Historiography, p.27. Italics Croce's.

(4) ibid., p.27.

Since philology is only a refinement of chronicle, the same essential problems remain. Philological histories remain disconnected, external and superficial. Their authority rests (and must necessarily rest in this approach to history) upon the authority of "the authorities". Since this gives no basis for any possible real authority, it remains empty; it is neither true nor false.

Does this mean that chronicle and philology are useless? No, says Croce, they are very necessary. They are the beginning and instrument of history, but they are not history itself.

c. History is not "universal history".

We come now to a misunderstanding of history which contains the errors which we have already identified in "philosophy of history" and in chronicle, and in addition has its own peculiar errors. This further misconception is "universal history".

"Universal history" partakes of the error of "philosophy of history" in that it attempts to subsume all of history under some particular pattern, and thus to present the whole sweep of human history as a rationally coherent whole. This process inevitably involves placing an interpretation upon historical facts; an interpretation deriving from the pattern or "key" which the historian has assumed holds the explanation of history. This may be achieved in a variety of ways. For example the historian may decide that history is primarily economic or political or religious. Upon the basis of this decision he will then choose

the so-called facts which are to be included in his "universal history". (And obviously, all of the facts of history cannot be included.) Thus, depending upon the kind of facts which he has chosen, "universal history" will be seen as primarily economic or political or religious or some other kind of history. A variant of this method of writing "universal history" is to select and trace out some theme which is supposed to explain all of history, e.g., the emergence of the rational mind.

Another error of "universal history" emerges necessarily from the fact that if it is to be truly "universal" it must cover the totality of human experience. However the totality of human experience is not available as a subject of historical study. This is most obviously true of pre-history and of the future; both of which are dealt with implicitly if not explicitly in "universal histories". (Concerning the future, it seems to be the case that having "explained" all of history it is impossible to resist the temptation to project this "explanation" into the future.) However it is not just pre-history and the future which present a problem in this respect, for it is to be questioned whether any one historian can enter into all of history sufficiently to say anything significant about it. This is particularly true of those periods and cultures about which there is very limited documentary evidence, e.g., the early Middle Ages. And finally, having claimed to "explain" all of

history, it is difficult for "universal history" to take any other position but that of being the explanation of history. All other interpretations are excluded.

In all of these ways "universal history" shares the errors of the "philosophy of history". The initial and implied assumption which gives rise to these errors——and we have seen that this assumption is the basic error in both "philosophy of history" and chronicle——is that all of the necessary facts and events of history are at hand ready to be grasped and lined up like checkers in the historian's chosen pattern. On this understanding historical events are objective things to be had merely by reproducing certain words from a book or manuscript of inscription; and that as such they constitute meaningful history. It is merely a matter of collecting the facts, and then of supplying the interpretation. It is only on this basis that "philosophy of history", chronicle and "universal history" are possible. History according to Augustine, Hegel, Marx, the doctrine of progress, Toynbee (etc.) reveals the painful inadequacy of this basis. Clearly then, "universal history" belongs to the "phenomenology of error".(1)

d. History is neither "poetical" nor "rhetorical".

If the historian turns his back upon the effort to write history on the basis of arranging so-called objective facts,

(1) Cf. Theory and History of Historiography, pp. 55-60.

what is to be the alternative? This problem receives

> ...a fallacious solution, expressed by the substitution of the interest of sentiment for the lack of interest of thought and of aesthetic coherence of representation for the logical coherence here unobtainable. The new erroneous form of history thus obtained is poetical history. (1)

In this way many of the difficulties discussed are overcome. There is now a criterion of value which is used to select the historical material to be used and to judge of its worth. There are many types of "poetical" history, e.g., histories of chivalry, of political parties, of movements, of national heroes, of nations etc.

A specific example will help to demonstrate the process which works in such histories. Let us take as an example the account of the Americal Revolution which is to be found in most American history text books and even others of a more advanced type. Here there is no question of dealing with all of the evidence or of looking upon the historical events as cold, objective fact. Rather there is a criterion which is used to select the material and to evaluate it. Roughly this criterion is that everything which demonstrates the incompetence of the British, the justice of the colonists' position and the heroism of their efforts marks historically valuable material. This kind of criterion is what Croce calls "sentiment"; national sentiment in this case. (Even the well-educated American is

(1) Theory and History of Historiography, p.35., Italics Croce's.

shocked the first time he comes across an account of the American Revolution as it is presented in such a work as The Cambridge Modern History which is not poetical history and where a different criterion is at work.) The inadequacy of this approach is too obvious to warrant further comment.

This "poetical" approach does have the virtue that the historian does not look upon his material as objective fact, but imaginatively enters into the experience, re-enacting the events and in some sense making them his own. It does, in the best instances, come alive. However there is obviously something wrong in such a process in view of the distorted version of history which it presents. This difficulty is that history's

> ...principle of determination cannot be the value known as the value of 'sentiment', which is life and not thought, and when this life finds expression and representation, before it has been dominated by thought, we have poetry, not thought... In order to have true history ...we must repress our loves, our tears, our scorn, and seek what function the event has fulfilled in social activity or civilization...(1)

The attempt of "poetical" history to overcome objective fact is right; it is the attempt to do it by using sentiment rather than thought as the principle of determination which is fallacious. The effort to relive history imaginatively is right; but the effort to do this apart from critical thought is fallacious.(2)

(1) Theory and History of Historiography, pp. 36-37.
(2) Cf. ibid., pp. 34-41.

The same essential process which we have observed in "poetical" history is to be found in "rhetorical" history. This is history which is narrated with a practical end. This end may be to introduce a historical truth into the mind, to arouse virtue or enthusiasm etc. Once again there is a principle of valuation which controls the selection and evaluation of material; but again the principle is the wrong one; it is not that of critical thought, but rather that which will promote a practical end. And once again there is a proper desire to let imagination play a part in the historical construction; but it is imagination controlled not by critical thought, but by the principle of determination: What will promote the practical end? There is a place and value for "poetical" and "rhetorical" history but it is not history properly so-called.(1)

Before we go on to give a positive statement of Croce's understanding of history, let us summarize this first negative section. We have shown that history is not the "philosophy of history" in which an "inner meaning" is imposed upon objective and meaningless facts. Secondly, it is not the stringing together of objective facts in a chronicle; not even when these facts have been critically edited as in philology. Thirdly, history is not "universal history", in which facts and events purporting to represent the whole sweep of history are placed together, origins

(1) Theory and History of Historiography, pp. 41-44.

and terminations outside of history supplied and an overall and exclusive meaning given or implied. Lastly the effort to overcome the fallacies of these histories by way of "poetical" and/or "rhetorical" history is not successful; for while they have a principle of evaluation and attempt to reconstruct history imaginatively, they do so not on the basis of critical thought, but on the basis of sentiment and the desire to promote a practical end.

II. Croce's Understanding of History.

a. Croce's understanding of history.

As we have said before, Croce's method of writing about history is that of a repeated treatment of a limited number of important themes, and including an examination of these themes in various contexts. For example, one constant theme is that "all history is contemporary history". This theme is examined in the context of a discussion of the documents the historian uses(1), in relation to the so-called "dark ages"(2), in the context of a discussion of the place of imagination in the writing of history(3), etc. We will examine this theme later in this section.

The disadvantage of this approach is that we do not have a sustained treatment of the nature of history. However, there

(1) Theory and History of Historiography, pp. 12-14 et passim.
(2) ibid., pp. 15-18 et passim.
(3) ibid., pp. 39, 91 et passim.

is a compensation to be found in Croce's writings in that his statements are carefully thought through and well articulated into the structure of his whole philosophic system. This results in the fact that each of his statements about the nature of history implicitly contains virtually everything he has to say on the subject. We will examine this remarkable thought out and articulated understanding of history under the following headings: 1. The manifestation of "spirit" as thought; 2. "Spirit" as the source of value in history; 3. A false alternative to "spirit" as the source of value in history; 4. Croce's understanding of history in relation to the various misconceptions of history.

1. The manifestation of "spirit" as thought.

What is "spirit" for Croce? It is interesting that although Croce uses this term frequently, his only explicit treatment of it is an infrequent sentence or paragraph. The easiest entrance into this matter is a statement on "spirit" by Hegel, upon whom Croce was critically dependent.(1) At the beginning of the Introduction to the Philosophy of History Hegel says:

> For, like the soul-conductor Mercury, the Idea is in truth, the leader of the peoples of the World; and Spirit, the rational and necessitated will of that conductor, is and has been the director of the events of the World's History. To become acquainted with Spirit in this its office of guidance, is the object of the present undertaking. (2)

(1) Croce critical dependence upon Hegel is to be seen in the title and contents of Croce's What is Living and What is Dead in the Philosophy of Hegel, translated by D. Ainslie, MacMillan and Co., London, 1915.

(2) Hegel, G.W.F., The Philosophy of History, translated by J. Sibree, Dover Publications Inc., New York, 1956, p.8.

A few pages later Hegel elaborates this, saying:

> ...that Spirit whose nature is always one and the same, but which unfolds this its one nature in the phenomena of the World's existence. (1)

Thus it would seem that for Hegel Spirit lies behind and motivates the Idea; and that Idea guiding the events of the world is seen in the unfolding of those very events. That this is essentially Croce's understanding of "spirit" will be seen as our exposition proceeds.

When it is said that this is "essentially" Croce's understanding, it is important to emphasize that the agreement between the two men is not complete. For Croce the expression of "spirit" in thought remains impersonal and is determined by the particular historical events which the historian studies. For Hegel Spirit is the will of the Idea which is "the leader of the peoples of the World". Here we have an objectified conception of Spirit and Idea which is foreign to Croce. This Idea, according to Hegel, then proceeds to "lead" people; thus having a separate existence from the people and their actions. Just how separate the Idea is from the actual historical events is seen in The Philosophy of History where the Idea twists the events into strange shapes, e.g., the Orient knew and knows that one man is free; the Greco-Roman world that some men are free and the Germanic world that all men are free. This is a "philosophy of history", and consistently rejected by Croce.

(1) The Philosophy of History, p. 10.

Now let us look at Croce himself in this matter. In one of his infrequent explicit statements about "spirit" Croce says:

> "...the spirit becomes transparent to itself as thought in the consciousness of the historian..." (1)

Thus it would seem that "spirit" is some underlying entity, not transparent (hence cloudy or dark) until it expresses itself in thought, e.g., the "spirit" of Gibbon became clear to itself (i.e., to Gibbon and those who study him) as he was engaged in the process of thought of writing his monumental history of the Roman empire. Croce emphasizes that the thought in which the underlying "spirit" finds expression is always thought about concrete and particular things. For example, in History as the Story of Liberty, he says:

> "But of ["spirit"] abstractly considered as outside or above things, it is as little possible to make a history [hence impossible to think about], as...to eat a fruit in general which is not a pear, a plum, an apricot, or other specified fruit." (2)

In other words, we cannot think about the "spirit" as such, but only about the "spirit" as manifested in specific acts of thought. For Croce these acts of thought can always be included under one of four categories; beauty, truth, morality and utility; and the investigation of these four categories forms the four sections of his Philosophy of the Spirit.

(1) Theory and History of Historiography, p.36.
(2) History as the Story of Liberty, 276.

The affinity between this point of view and that expressed in our earlier quotation from Hegel is evident. The intention of Hegel expressed in the quotation is to examine "the events of the World's History" in order to "become acquainted with Spirit in...its office of guidance" of the Idea. Hegel, like Croce, sees the manifestation of "spirit" in thought or Idea as one which is expressed in the concrete events of history. This view of reality runs throughout Croce and Hegel. The reality of anything does not consist in its essence or its abstract generality; rather it must consist in its developed form which materializes in the historical dialectic. In the context of a discussion God, Hegel says that it is,

> "...a misunderstanding to suppose that knowledge can be content with the "per se", the essence, but can do without the form, that the absolute principle, or absolute intuition, makes the carrying out of the former, or development of the latter, needless. Precisely because the former is as necessary to the essence as the essence to it, absolute reality must not be conceived of and expressed as essence alone, i.e., as immediate substance, or as pure self-intuition of the Divine, but as form also, and with the entire wealth of the developed form. Only then is it grasped and expressed as really actual. (1)

In Croce himself there are many places which indicate that he has the same attitude as to what constitutes reality. For example, Croce says: "The act of thought is the consciousness

(1) Hegel, G.W.F., Phenomenology of Mind, translated by J.B. Baillie, in Hegel Selections (The Modern Student's Library edition), Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1929, p.16. Italics mine.

of the spirit that is consciousness..."[1], i.e., what we experience as consciousness is consciousness of the "spirit"; and this consciousness of the "spirit" is realized in the act of thought; concrete, dialectical acts of thought being understood here.

In short, Croce says that "spirit" as such cannot be thought about; but only the manifestations of "spirit" in concrete thought. This being the case, it will be expedient for us to deal as much as possible with only the manifestation of "spirit", i.e., with the act of thought. Since "spirit" as such cannot be thought about, but only "spirit" manifested as thought; and since thought is always thought about the concrete; therefore history must be conceived in terms of concrete, particular acts of thought, e.g., thought about Caesar's invasion of Britain in 54 B.C. For:

> ...history is thought, and, as such, thought of the universal, of the universal in its concreteness, and therefore always determined in a particular manner. (2)

2. "Spirit" as the source of value in history.

Let us now turn to another of Croce's recurring themes. This may be stated: "Spirit" as manifested in concrete acts of thought about beauty, truth, morality and utility is value; and

(1) Theory and History of Historiography, p. 118.
(2) ibid., p.60.

indeed the only value that it is possible to conceive. It is thought alone which conveys value (meaningfulness, usefulness, truth about reality). For example, it is only in the process of thinking through the preconditions, motives, preparation, execution, results etc. of Caesar's invasion of Britain in 54 A.D. that that account comes to be meaningful to us; it is only in this way that the account of the invasion is seen to be truth about reality, i.e., that it assumes value. The only other way in which one might go about giving value to this or any other event would be to impose some meaning on the event from the outside, e.g., to turn it into some kind of "rhetorical" or "poetical history", the fallaciousness of which we have discussed previously.

This process of thought of which Croce speaks is, as should be clear from our example, not about anything abstract or transcendental; rather it is always concrete thought about historical events. Croce expresses it:

> ...thought always thinks history, the history of reality that is one, and beyond thought there is nothing, for the natural object becomes a myth when it is affirmed as object, and shows itself in its true reality as nothing else but the human spirit itself...(1)

This does not mean that nothing exists in any sense outside of thought. That is, objects do have numerical and spatial existence apart from thought. There are, for example,

(1) Theory and History of Historiography, p.133.

such things as dead and unthought documents and artifacts, and Croce discusses at some length their limited existence. One can speak of there being certain quantities of these in specific places. However, insofar as they are not thought they are inert, useless, and yield no knowledge.

Once again there is an affinity between this position and that of Hegel, although the terminology is largely different. For Hegel the self-consciousness of the inquirer after knowledge is composed of two parts: first, "the fact that I know" and secondly "what I know". Now,

> In self consciousness these are merged in one; for the Spirit knows itself. It involves an appreciation of its own nature, as also an energy enabling it to realize itself; to make itself actually what it is potentially ... Universal History...is...the process of working out the knowledge of that which it is potentially. (1)

For Hegel "the fact that I know" (at all) only comes concurrently with "what I know" (and the dialectical process whereby I come to know "what I know"). The two are merged in one. I come to know by a process of thinking which is historical. That which is real is the rational; or, more specifically, rational historical thought. The relation between this and Croce's contention that it is thought which conveys value (meaningfulness, usefulness, truth about reality) should be obvious now. Of

(1) Hegel, G., The Philosophy of History, pp. 17-18. Italics Hegel's.

course, as we have said before, Croce follows Hegel in this methodology but not in the particular way in which Hegel works it out in terms of "the Idea", "Universal History", the fulfillment of these in the State etc.

So it is that Croce, with a selective dependence upon Hegel, maintains that it is thought which conveys value. For our purposes we may say that it is thought which conveys value <u>in history</u>. This position will be further supported as we turn now to consider a false alternative to this position.

3. A false alternative to "spirit" as the source of value in history.

Croce maintains again and again that we must not start our historical inquiry after knowledge in the realm of "empirical" or "brute" fact; in the realm of "non-thought", as he sometimes refers to it. This way of thinking is the error behind the approach to history which assumes that we first collect facts and then search for causes or connections between the facts. To start in this way is to posit a dualism between matter and mind which is then impossible to overcome. (Croce like Vico sees himself engaged in overcoming the dualism which arose with Descartes.) However, because much inquiry does start in just this way, historical inquiry is degraded. In Croce's own words, this degradation is brought about by

> ...the coarseness of the mind incapable of perceiving the difference between pure concepts [thought] and empirical concepts [non-thought], between judgment and classification...(1)

Here again we see Croce using a term in a very special way. "Empirical" is used by him in a perjorative way; it is contrasted with judgment. However, empirical inquiries as we know them are always permeated with thought and judgment; these qualities being essential to their progression. But Croce uses "empirical" in another sense, namely as the listing and classifying (pigeonholing) of facts; it is for him the second half of a mind-matter dualism which he is striving to overcome.

Now what happens, asks Croce, when an inquiry is conducted in this dualistic manner; that is, starting with the collection of "empirical" or unthought events and facts? Naturally the inquirer is usually not content just with the collection of facts. He also expects to justify his inquiry by demonstrating that these facts have some meaning or pattern, or that they have some bearing upon a particular problem, i.e., to demonstrate that they have some value. But where is this value to come from? "Spirit" as manifested in concrete acts of thought about specific historical facts and events cannot convey any value in this situation. Why? Because the facts and events in the dualistic approach under consideration are posited as "brute",

(1) History as the Story of Liberty, p.271.

"empirical", unthought etc. By definition then the "spirit" has nothing to think about; hence it cannot convey any value upon them.

Does the matter end here? Croce would undoubtedly say that it should end here, but in fact it does not. There is a demand for value. The only possibility left is for the value to be imported from the outside and imposed upon the facts. These values which are imported into the historical scene are termed by Croce as "transcendental" or "metaphysical". Any inquiry which starts from the dualistic position just described will inevitably have recourse to "transcendental" or "metaphysical" values; the two go together, and together they are repeatedly attacked by Croce. He understands the "transcendental" and "metaphysical" as being another realm from our own, and "transcendental" and "metaphysical" values as coming from this other realm. Since this is their origin the only relation they can have to the facts and events of this world is that of being <u>imposed upon</u> them. This is clearly a dualism; it is "non-spiritual" (always keeping our previous discussion in mind) and as such deeply alien to Croce's thought. For Croce this procedure is literally not conceivable. The only genuine value is that which arises from the "spirit" as it thinks about concrete historical events.

This concludes our statement in outline of Croce's understanding of history. It remains in the following section to see

what light this understanding throws upon the various misconceptions of history which we discussed earlier. The effect of this will be to deepen the understanding which we have presented here in outline. Before we proceed to this, however, it will be well to say a final word about the relation between Croce and Hegel. We have commented on this relation in the course of our exposition, and have seen that in spite of a difference in terminology there is an important area of agreement between the two men. This agreement consists in the view that human "spirit" finds expression in concrete acts of dialectical thought about the events of history; and that through this dialectical process that which is potential in the human "spirit" becomes real and actual. The differences between the two men lie, as has been indicated before, in the way in which this dialectical process is worked out.(1) For the purposes of our present discussion, the most important of these differences are; (a) for Croce the dialectical process is much more strictly and consistently controlled by the critical investigation of historical fact; and (b) Croce's consistent refusal to import into history any value which does not arise out of the historical process itself. This results in: (a) the absence in Croce of the arbitrary and fanciful

(1) A full exposition of these differences are found in Croce's What is Living and what is Dead in the Philosophy of Hegel. One of the most important differences, Croce feels, is Hegel's confusion between the "synthesis of opposites" and "relation of distincts". This confusion is explored at length in the book.

constructions of history which we find in Hegel's The Philosophy of History; and (b) in eliminating such "transcendental" and problematical assertions as "The State is the Divine Idea as it exists on Earth.",(1)

4. Croce's understanding of history in relation to the various misconception of history.

Let us pause now and see how this foregoing statement of Croce's understanding of history is related to our first and negative section on misconceived history. This will also enable us to illustrate how Croce's theory finds expression in dealing with specific kinds of history.

First, history as chronicle and philology is rejected because it is "empirical", i.e., it is the listing and classification of unthought facts and events. There is a classification following a pattern supplied by an uncritical chronology; but there is no judgment. Anybody who has ever sat through a series of lectures on a set of historical documents (for example the various strands of material which go to form the Old Testament); has seen them refined, classified and possibly characterized with a few stock phrases; anyone who has observed this process should know the difference between philology and history. The net result of such a process is that one acquires many more-or-less valuable technical facts; but one does not have any understanding of the

(1) Hegel, G., The Philosophy of History, p. 39.

situation out of which they arose, the intention they were intended to serve, the degree to which execution matched intention etc. This is philology and not history. As philology it is an indispensable constituent of history, and confusion only arises when philology claims (implicitly or explicitly) to say all that can be said. When philology thus claims to be history a dualism is set up, and unthought or empirical facts are posited apart from thought. No value is conceivable in this approach because where could value come from but from the facts and events themselves? But these have been posited as unthought, "brute", "empirical" etc. One cannot think through or understand facts which have been defined as unthought. A chronological arrangement of these facts is the only legitimate possibility here.

There is however another but illegitimate possibility. This is to engage in what we have called "philosophy of history" or "universal history". Here the attempt is made to overcome the dualism between empirical fact and thoughtful judgment by arranging the facts according to some "transcendental" scheme. This scheme might be that of Joachim of Floris' three ages of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; Marx's progression from primitive communism to the classless society; a scheme of universal history showing the progress of civilization etc. All such "transcendental history", as Croce calls it, is illegitimate because in each case the principle of interpretation does not

arise out of the facts; rather it is imposed upon them. The schemes are a priori, and the facts are made to fit the particular scheme. The divisions of the schemes are called variously: "age of faith", "primitive communism", "Enlightenment", "age of progress" etc. Any fact or event which does not conform to the chosen scheme must be minimized, rejected as atypical or dealt with in some such way. For example, to study the crusades within an "age of faith" framework creates more confusion than it does understanding. In contrast to these misunderstandings Croce argues, as we have seen, for a non-transcendental understanding and judgment of history.

In summary then, "History is history of the spirit", i.e., history is the historical study of the "spirit" as that "spirit" is manifested in concrete acts of thought--in a coin, a painting, a document, the record of an invasion and so on. History arises by understanding just such concrete things as these. That is to say, history arises by thinking through the concrete historical events and documents themselves; which events and documents are expressions of the human "spirit". This historical understanding constitutes the value of the subject of historical inquiry (e.g., a coin or document); indeed, "...the natural object becomes a myth [in the sense of having no truth-full existence] when it is affirmed as object", i.e., when it is affirmed apart from the thinking "spirit". This is the basis for the claim that "... spirit is value, and indeed the only value that it is possible

to conceive, [and] ...history is clearly always history of values." The event is a concrete act of "spirit", and the understanding of the event is achieved through its 're-enactment' in the thought ("spirit") of the historian. The value of history is just this event in conjunction with its 're-enactment' in the consciousness of the historian.

Because this is so, Croce maintains, the only revelation "is that which thought gives to thought by means of criticism."(1) Thus it is that "the value which rules the writing of history is the value of thought", and nothing else.

This concludes our examination of Croce's understanding of the nature of history, and of his associated critique of the various misunderstandings of history. This foundation will help us now in first drawing attention to two corollaries of Croce's understanding of history; and, secondly, in describing briefly the steps by which the historian sets about the writing of history.

b. Two Corollaries of Croce's Understanding of History.

1. All history is contemporary history.

At the very beginning of the Theory and History of Historiography Croce launches into a discussion of the statement: "every true history is contemporary history".(2) Commentators often seem determined to make something difficult or even mystical out of this and similar statements. Actually it is a very straightforward position.

(1) History as the Story of Liberty, p. 67.
(2) Theory and History of Historiography, p. 12.

Croce asks: What are the conditions of contemporary history? They are: "that the documents are before the historian and that they are intelligible."(1) This means that the "spirit" (i.e., mind and thought) of the historian acts on the documents. This act of thought consists of two aspects, the conceptual and the intuitive. The conceptual aspect has to do with logic and deduction, i.e., history proceeds in an orderly and reasonable way. The second aspect is intuition. This much misused word is Croce's term for imagination.(2)

The conceptual aspects does not call for further comment, but the intuitive or imaginative aspect does. It is imagination which links the documents to life. Croce takes the example of Mexican art which, for him, has no interest.(3) Therefore a history of Mexican art would not be history for him; it is only a chronicle. He might deal with it conceptually, but not imaginatively. As a result there is no truth in it for him; rather, as far as he is concerned, it is a "dark history" or a "dark age". However, Croce continues, if for some reason Mexican art were to become a living interest for him, then the whole situation would be changed. Now the relevant documents and works of are would be related to his life; now genuine history and truth would be a

(1) Theory and History of Historiography, p. 12.
(2) Croce uses both words, but "intuition" is used more frequently.
(3) Theory and History of Historiography, pp. 13-14. This example is given in these pages.

possibility here. Now,

> that problem [i.e., Mexican art] is related to my being in the same way as the history of a bit of business in which I am engaged, or a love affair in which I am indulging... I examine it with the same anxiety and am troubled with the same sense of unhappiness until I have succeeded in solving it. (1)

Life and document are now related, and history can result. Obviously one cannot conceptually think oneself into such a relation with Mexican art, the Reformation, the American Civil War or any other historical event. Rather this living relation comes as a result of imaginatively perceiving the many subtle relationships between the event and one's own experience. This is what Croce means when he makes such statements as The "sources [of history] are in our own breasts."(2) On the other hand the historian cannot possibly deal with an event without having this imagination controlled by critical thought. In the unity of the two lies historical truth.

> Without this imaginative reconstruction or integration it is not possible to write history, or to read it, or to understand it. But this sort of imagination, which is really quite indispendible to the historian, is the imagination which is inseparable from the historical synthesis [containing the critical and conceptual elements], the imagination in and for thought, the concreteness of thought, which is never an abstract concept, but always a relation [to life] and a [critical] judgment...(3)

(1) Theory and History of Historiography, p.13.
(2) ibid., p.26.
(3) ibid., p.39.

So it is that "document and criticism, or life and thought, are the true sources of history——that is to say, the two elements of historical synthesis..."(1); and the document (life) is presented to criticism (thought) through the exercise of imagination. Croce's choice of the terms "imagination" and, especially, "intuition" in this context is not a happy one; but the meaning is clear enough.

At this point it is easy to mistake Croce's intention. It is not the case that life, or the documents which record past life, stand outside of history; and then imaginative and critical thought come along to work upon these external "things" in order to produce historical knowledge. Rather, it is the unity of documents and thought which

> form part of history itself, they are within the synthesis, they form a constituent part of it and are constituted by it. Hence the idea of a history with its sources outside of itself is another fancy to be dispelled...(2)

For example, I have often had before me the documents of the Battle of Gettysburg. This battle has a living interest for me because, among other things, I realize that my country and I myself are what we are to no small extent because of what happened there. This realization is, in Croce's terms, the result of intuition or imagination. (This intuitive realization does not serve merely as an initial incentive for the study of the documents, rather it is a factor in their understanding from start to finish.) Through the use of the documents I am able to reconstruct the battle in all of its aspects.

(1) Theory and History of Historiography, p.23. Italics Croce's.
(2) ibid., p.23. Italics mine.

Some of the documents enable me to enter into the ambitions, plans and motives of the leaders of both sides; other documents tell me how the men in the ranks thought and felt; still others indicate the part played by terrain, supplies and the support received from Washington and Richmond; and still others enable me to know the immediate and remote consequences of the battle. Now Croce's point is: The meaningful historical existence of the Battle of Gettysburg is nothing else than the unity of my thought (imaginative and conceptual) and the intelligible documents; nothing else than the unity of the "spirit" of the historian acting upon the documents; nothing else that the unity of the "spirit" of the historian acting upon the documentary record of a concrete record of life (historical event), and making that life his own.

History thus properly understood is always contemporary. There is no need to make something mystical or paradoxical out of this statement. It is simply that whether an event took place a month, a year, a decade or a century ago does not have any important effect upon that event as history. The history of World War II and of the American Civil War are not essentially different; both are produced through the unity of document and "spirit" (thought); and the difficulties of interpretation are the same in both cases. This is true in spite of the fact that the latter is usually called "past" and the former might well be called a part of contemporary history. "Past" in distinction from contemporary, "before" and "after" are terms of the chronicle; they are not

terms for the historian, except incidentally. History becomes contemporary or presently lived when the documents are before the historian and his 'spirit' acts upon them.

This means, in terms of Croce's understanding of history which we have examined in a previous section, that the historian's "spirit" thinks imaginatively and conceptually about the historical event recorded in the document; and through this conscious act of thought the values emerge which enable him to evaluate the individual documents and the event as a whole. The value which rules history is the value of thought; and specifically, historical thought. And this historical thought emerges itself by means of historical thought. "Before" and "after" are not important in this process, but rather whether or not the documents "vibrate in the mind of the historian"——one of Croce's characterizations of this whole process.

The thesis that all history is contemporary history is thus seen to be a direct corollary of "history is history of the spirit". However this corollary which we have been discussing is more interesting than the statement from which it is derived. This is because it is less abstract and more immediately applicable to our experience. Another way of stating this corollary is to say that history is "knowledge of the <u>eternal present</u>".(1) In terms of our earlier example, this means that the Battle of

(1) <u>Theory and History of Historiography</u>, p.61 Italics Croce's

Gettysburg is just as present now as it was the day after the battle, or indeed the actual day of the battle.(1) And because the past is eternally present (potentially, and again and again in actuality), "We are products of the past and we live immersed in the past, which encompasses us."(2)

We will return to this theme when we discuss R.G. Collingwood, for whom it is also a fundamental idea; and then again in the last two parts of this thesis where we will explore its relation to the doctrine of revelation.

2. The identity of philosophy and history.

On the basis of the total foregoing discussion we turn now to Croce's position that there is a relation of identity between philosophy and history. We have already dealt with the basic misunderstanding of history which makes this statement look like sheer nonsense; namely that history is chronicle and philology. If history were this, then obviously it would have no relation to philosophy.(3)

When Croce says that philosophy and history are identical he does not mean that linguistic analysis, ethical theory or

(1) A critic might say: "A motion picture camera could have taken a newsreel of the battle on the day of the battle, and this cannot be done now." Croce would agree, I believe, that in these terms the battle is not eternally present but indeed past. This definition equates "present" with "matter in motion". A newsreel is a form of chronicle.

(2) History as the Story of Liberty, p.43.

(3) Theory and History of Historiography, p.61.

some other field of philosophical inquiry is capable of rendering luminous the Industrial Revolution or any other event in history; nor is the reverse true; nor indeed generally is any specific philosophical investigation illuminating in regard to any specific historical problem. Rather, when Croce says that philosophy and history are identical, he means that both are a a methodology; both are means of dealing with a particular problem. There is no general, universal or closed history (as we have already discussed) with a claim to be universally valid; and likewise there is no general, universal or closed philosophy with its claim to be universally valid. There are only an infinite number of particular historical and philosophical problems; and these are each and all approached by a methodology which we should call historical.

The identity between history and philosophy is evident at all essential points. If I wish to study the philosophy of Descartes, what do I do? First of all I must have at least one document, e.g., the Discourse on Method. Then, in Croce's terminology, my "spirit" (mind, thought) deals with this document. As the painful experience of many college freshmen demonstrates, it is not enough to deal with this document conceptually. When it is dealt with only in this way the words on the pages do not seem to have any relation to anything. Something else is needed. This need is that the words of Descartes are seen to be dealing

with a specific and real problem, i.e., a problem which I can see has some relation to my experience. (Those philosophies which do not have such a relation Croce characterizes as "circling in the void".) This insight whereby document is related to life comes from the faculty of thought which Croce calls "intuition" or "imagination." So it is that we have here, as in history; document and thought (imaginative and conceptual) leading to the "re-enactment" of Descartes' thought, i.e., the problems he faced when he set out to write the Discourse on Method, his dealing with them, the solution arrived at etc. Only in this way do we have true philosophy, and this is also true history.

In such an examination, how do we evaluate Descartes' Discourse on Method? By importing criteria from somewhere else and then seeing to what extent Descartes meets these criteria? Of course not. Rather our evaluation comes from the thoughtful examination of the document itself. If we say that Descartes' effort is successful, we can do so only to the extent that his thought validates itself to us in the process of our examination, i.e., it is a matter of "interior verification".(1) Otherwise we can only say that the Discourse on Method is valid because Descartes, Prof. Kemp Smith or some other authority says it is so. This would be anecdote and not philosophy.

(1) Cf. Theory and History of Historiography, p.136. "...true history is that of which an interior verification is possible, and is therefore history ideally contemporary and present,..."

In order to demonstrate still another parallel between history and philosophy, let us ask the question: Is Descartes' philosophy "past" or "present day" philosophy? This is a rather pointless question as can be seen by asking whether his philosophy is more "past" or more "present day" than that of Plato or Prof. Ayer? The terms "past" and "present day" really have nothing to do with philosophy except to give chapter headings in "surveys." Insofar as Descartes' philosophy is philosophically-historically understood it is as contemporary ("eternally present") as it ever was; if it is not so understood then it is a type of chronicle.

Still again, does philosophy say anything that is universally true? Many philosophers have thought so. Insofar as Descartes makes universally true statements he makes them as they arise out of the particular problems which he is examining. Again this constitutes a point of identity with the methodology of history, for "to negate universal history does not mean to negate the universal in history... [for] history is thought, and, as such, thought of the universal, of the universal in its concreteness, and therefore always determined in a particular manner."(1)

The anti-metaphysical bias of the position out of which this identification of philosophy and history arises is evident.

(1) Theory and History of Historiography, pp.59-60.

> ...the superiority of philosophy as methodology over philosophy as metaphysic, is shown by the capacity of the former to solve the problems of the latter by critisizing them and pointing out their origin. Metaphysic, on the other hand, is incapable of solving not only the problems of methodology, but even its own problems, without having recourse to the fantastic and arbitrary. Thus questions as to the reality of the external world, of soul-substance, of the unknowable, of dualisms and antitheses, and so forth, have disappeared in gnoseological doctrines, which have substituted better conceptions for those which we formerly possessed concerning the logic of the sciences, explaining those questions as eternally renascent aspects of the dialectic or phenomenology of knowledge. (1)

This position can be substantiated at many levels of philosophical discussion, and its fruitfulness has been amply demonstrated in modern philosophy. However, in order to prevent this position from taking on the aura of "final truth" which Croce hated so, we must ask one question of Croce here. Croce's greatly prized (and rightly so) methodology rests upon a very high valuation of history, historical event, the created order etc. as a means of knowing reality. It is, for example, a methodology which is alien from Greco-Roman and Eastern philosophy. The question which we have to ask of Croce, then, is: What is the origin of the high valuation of history upon which this position depends? Some have argued that it has its origins in Christian revelation.(2) Be that as it may, it is difficult to see that the

(1) Theory and History of Historiography, pp. 153-154. Italics Croce's.
(2) Cf. Collingwood, R.G., The Idea of History, pp. 44ff.

underlying assumptions of this position have been arrived at methodologically; and in fact they have every appearance of being (for want of a better term) metaphysical in origin. Nevertheless, recognizing the great value of Croce's position, let us permit him to have the last word in this section. He summarizes his position as to the relationship between philosophy and history in the following words.

> When philosophy has been defined as I have defined it as the "methodology of historiography," we must still not forget that methodology would be abstract unless it coincided with the interpretation of events, that is, unless it renewed itself and continually developed at one with the intelligence of events... A philosophical problem can be resolved only when it is set and dealt with in relation to the events which have made it arise, and which have to be understood in order to understand it. Otherwise the philosophical problem remains abstract and gives rise to those inconclusive and interminable arguments which are... always at the same stage of development. (1)

c. Three Factors in the Writing of History.

We have considered at length Croce's understanding of the writing of history; but there still remains three factors which have hitherto only been implied. It will be well to make these explicit, especially since they will appear in our discussion of R.G. Collingwood, and in the last and constructive part of this thesis. It should be remembered here that Croce speaks not only as a philosopher, but also as a practicing historian.

1. History begins with a problem.

(1) <u>History as the Story of Liberty</u>, pp. 147-148.

What does the historian want or need as he begins to write the history of, say, the Battle of Gettysburg? Does he want or need absolutely all of the knowledge which pertains to that event? Croce refers to this complete knowledge as the infinity of knowledge, and says of it:

> The road of progress to the infinite [in the sense just indicated above] is as wide as that to hell, and if it does not lead to hell it certainly leads to the madhouse. And that infinite, which grows bigger the moment we first touch it, does not avail us; indeed it fills us with fear. Only the poor finite assists us, the determined, the concrete, which is grasped by thought and which lends itself as base for our experience and as point of departure for our action.(1)

Even were this infinite knowledge offered to us, our only course would be "to <u>forget</u> [it], and to concentrate upon that particular point alone which corresponds to a problem and constitutes living, active history, <u>contemporary history</u>."(2) In other words, not only is this infinite knowledge not possible, it is not even necessary or desirable. The historian starts with a concrete problem or problems (What brought Lee into Pennsylvania? Why did Pickett's charge fail? What enabled Lee to escape back into Virginia?), and the necessary knowledge is available to 're-enact' (and thus make contemporary) the battle and thereby to answer the problems. "That 'remaining' history [the rest of the infinity of knowledge concerning Gettysburg, and not connected with any problem] is the eternal phantom of

(1) <u>Theory and History of Historiography</u>, p.53.
(2) <u>ibid.</u>, pp. 53-54. Croce's italics.

the thing in itself, which is neither 'thing' nor 'in itself,' but only the imaginative projection of the infinity of our action and of our knowledge."(1)

History begins with a problem presented to the historian by his "spirit"; i.e., through imagination and conceptual thought he sees the problem as it existed then, and yet which also exists now for him as an historian. History which does not start from a problem is chronicle or some other misunderstanding of history. The dictum "Study problems, not periods," has this understanding behind it. History begins with a problem, and "has at its heart a motive which links it up with the seriousness of life as it is lived..."(2)

2. Cause and end.

First collect the facts, then connect them causally. This statement represents a common misconception of how the historian works. However, even brief reflection upon our discussion of Croce will indicate that this concept has no place in his historical methodology, although he agrees that "cause" may be used loosely in this way. For Croce the only cause is that which emerges as the historian 're-enacts' in his thought the genesis, development and results of a particular historical event. Any other cause is one which is imposed upon the historical process from the outside. The futility of the search for such causes can

(1) Theory and History of Historiography, p. 55. Cf. History as the Story of Liberty, pp. 85, 118.

(2) History as the Story of Liberty, p. 22. See also p. 18. Cf. My Philosophy, p. 198.

readily be seen in the various examples which have been put forward from time to time, e.g., race, the will of God, the Renaissance spirit, economic production etc; each and all of which are a source of merriment for the first critic who comes along with a different point of view.

A further difficulty with the search for cause is the obvious one of where one is to stop the process of tracing back the chain of cause. The only "solution" is to say that one is not interested in the first cause, but only in proximate causes. But this is, Croce maintains, a "fig leaf" to cover up the fact that the historian has made an arbitrary decision to stop at a particular link in the supposed causal chain. Nor is any help to be received here if, instead of looking back for a cause, one looks forward to an end. Immediately the familiar problem presents itself. Since the end is something in the future, it does not arise out of history, but is imposed upon history, e.g., as in the case of the "classless society".

Croce's constantly repeated position is that if we want to speak of cause and end in history, then they must be those which emerge in the methodological examination of specific historical events. It is here that we see Croce's intention to present a radically secular understanding of history is particularly evident.(1) Whether this understanding can only be incorporated

(1) Cf Theory and History of Historiography, pp. 64ff, 77, 85, 100ff. et passim.

into a radically secular point of view is another question.

3. Historical conditioning.

The term "historical conditioning" refers to the much debated question of to the extent to which the historian is conditioned and hence limited by his own particular historical period. Croce speaks to this problem, but not as thoroughly as one would wish. He says, as we have seen earlier in another context, that an historian may be so conditioned (by personal, social and other factors) that it is impossible for him to "re-enact" particular historical problems; and hence it is impossible for him to make a genuine historical inquiry about those problems. We gave one of Croce's examples of this situation in which he says that if an historian had a total lack of interest and appreciation of Mexican art, this fact would so condition the historian as to make it impossible for him to write a genuine history of that subject.

However Croce does not say whether there might be an intermediate stage between this situation where a subject is closed or "dark" to the historian, and that in which a period is open and fully capable of being 're-enacted'. In other words, whether or not a historical problem might not be partially "dark" and partially "light" to an historian. Yet it would be reasonable to suppose that the historian might frequently find himself in just this mixed situation. For example, it is evident that

Gibbon, in his The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, was largely "closed" to the religious aspects of his problem; but not to all other aspects. However just what Croce's position would be in this matter is not clear.

Chapter IV

COLLINGWOOD'S UNDERSTANDING OF HISTORY.

As we have stated in the preceding chapters, and as will be evident in the following pages, R.G. Collingwood is a direct heir of the intellectual heritage of Vico and Croce. Because this is so, and since we have already made an examination of Vico and Croce, we will feel ourselves justified in stating certain parts of Collingwood's understanding of history more concisely than we would have done otherwise. However, this does not mean that the following examination of Collingwood is to be simply a repetition or resume of what has gone before. Certain distinctive features of Collingwood's position will be seen to emerge; and moreover Collingwood possesses advantage over Vico and Croce respectively. As a result of standing well within the 20th Century, Collingwood does not have to work within the context of the undeveloped state of historical inquiry which existed in the 18th Century, and within which Vico was obliged to work. In respect to Croce, Collingwood has what many will feel to be a decided advantage in that his observations on history are free from Croce's often esoteric language and his elaborate philosophical system.

For all of these reasons we may expect Collingwood to make his own distinctive contribution to our discussion.

The principle source of what follows is Collingwood's The Idea of History. This book is a posthumous collection of unpublished material written between 1936 and 1940. Although part of this material as we have it was possibly hurriedly written, nevertheless Collingwood had thought of it as eventually going to form his "chief work". It is not surprising in view of the genesis of this book that it is somewhat repetitive, and that it lacks a clear, over-all organization. We will begin our examination of Collingwood's understanding of history by looking at his criticism of various widely held misconceptions of history.

1. History as Misconceived.

a. History is not chronicle.

The commonest misunderstanding of history, and one which must be emphatically denied, is that history is chronicle; that is, that history is a listing of dates, events,

movements etc. The so-called "outlines of history" are not history at all, but collections of facts arranged in various ways.(1)

Closely related to this is the mistaken idea that history is the transmitting of the testimony of witnesses to past events.

> As thus misconceived, history consists in accepting and preserving testimony, and the writing of history consists in transcribing, translating and compiling. Such work is useful, but it is not history; there is no criticism, no interpretation, no reliving of past experience in one's own mind. (2)

Collingwood refers to this pseudo-history as "scissors-and-paste" history. It is the uncritical acceptance upon authority of what someone else has said is true. History is obviously impossible upon this basis.(3)

b. History is not "pigeon holing".

(1) Cf. Collingwood, R.G., The Idea of History, Oxford University Press, 1946, p.202 et passim.

(2) ibid., p.204.

(3) Cf. The Idea of History, pp. 234-235, 257ff et passim.

The "pigeon holing" approach to history is really a slightly subtler version of the "scissors-and-paste" approach. "Pigeon holing" consists in grouping historical material together into certain periods, or arranging it in a particular pattern. These period or patterns "may be necessary a priori on logical grounds, or may be forced upon our minds by the fact of its frequent repetition, or it may be a bit of both."(1) In this way a wide sweep of European history might be seen, to give a common example, as: Dark Ages, Middle Ages, Renaissance and Enlightenment. The arbitrary and biased nature of such schemes is clearly indicated in the names attached to this set of "pigeon holes".

c. History is neither "universal history" nor the "philosophy of history".

Collingwood does not speak about "universal history" at length(2), and he does not use the term "philosophy of history" in the sense in which we have been using it. However, his opposition to both of these types of false history is quite evident; he sees both of them as forms of "pigeon holing". As historical inquiry developed in the 19th Century, Collingwood says, the historians became dissatisfied with the then prevalent conception of history as being a matter of "scissors-and-paste". As was quite natural in the 19th Century, they wished to raise history to a science; and the analogy of natural science was

(1) Cf. The Idea of History, p.264. Cf. pp. 327-328.
(2) See however Collingwood, op.cit., pp.103-104, 265.

close at hand. So the historians were led, in accord with the commonplace procedure of the day, to collect historical facts; to elaborate patterns or theories "explaining" these facts; and then to extrapolate these patterns into the past and the future.

> It proved to be not at all a difficult task for anybody with an active mind and a taste for hard work. For there was no need to collect all the facts known to historians. Any large collection of facts, it was found, revealed patterns in plenty; and extrapolating such patterns into the remote past, about which there was very little information, and into the future, about which there was none, gave the 'scientific' historian just that sense of power which scissors-and-paste history denied him. (1)

This effort was, Collingwood continues, "a delusion". All such histories are marked by an arbitrary selection of historical evidence and the claim to be <u>the</u> interpretation of history, but their fundamental error is that they look upon history as objective events which can be manipulated into patterns of meaning. Speaking of Toynbee, whom Collingwood regards as a writer of the type of history under discussion here, he says:

> He [Toynbee] regards history as a mere spectacle, something consisting of facts observed and recorded by the historian, phenomena presented externally to his gaze, not experiences into which he must enter and which he must make his own. (2)

This is the fundamental reason why the value of "universal history" and the "philosophy of history" is "exactly nil".

(1) Collingwood, <u>op.cit.</u>, p.265.

(2) <u>ibid</u> p.163.

d. History is not prophecy or predicting the future.

The rejection of history as "pigeon holing" implies the rejection of history as prophecy. Spengler and Toynbee have this (among other things) in common with Jeremiah: they all speak of "declines". When they speak in this way they are being prophetic; they are speaking of that which is to come, and of the seeds of this future development which are even now present. Prophecy is the judging of that character of a future time on the basis of past and present experience.

However, all such endeavours are notoriously difficult. They assume that a certain period of history can be characterized ("pigeon-holed") as "bad" (or "good", a "Golden Age", an "Enlightenment"); and that a future period can be characterized as "good" (or "bad", as the case may be). Speaking to this problem of the historian's relation to the future, Collingwood makes two observations. First:

> The so-called good periods are the ones into whose spirit the historian has penetrated, owing either to the existence of abundant evidence or to his own capacity for re-living the experience they enjoyed; the so-called bad periods are either those for which evidence is relatively scanty, or those whose life he cannot, for reasons arising out of his own experience and that of his age, reconstruct within himself. (1)

Secondly Collingwood observes that:

(1) Collingwood, op.cit., p.327.

> ...the task of judging the value of a certain way of life taken in its entirity is an impossible task, because no such thing in its entirity is ever a possible object of historical knowledge.(1)

For these reasons history is not prophecy, nor can it be (a closely related misunderstanding) produced in order to "teach a lesson" or "point a moral". This does not mean that generalization about history is totally impossible.(2) For example, we may make very general statements such as: Persistent social discontent usually leads to political instability. But the value of such statements in the study of history is obviously very limited, for in a specific situation we need to know such things as what constitutes social discontent, the effect of any stabilizing factors which may be present, the form which the political instability is going to take and so on. For this reason the limited ability of the historian to generalize about history does not form a basis for prophecy; nor does it enable the historian to do much in the way of using historical studies to "teach a lesson" to his contemporaries.

e. History is not the description of objective facts.

One of Collingwood's fundamental theses is that there can be no history of objective facts, of the "out there", of the I-It.

(1) Collingwood, op.cit., p.327. Cf. Popper, Karl, The Poverty of Historicism, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957, p.151 et passim.

(2) Cf. Gardiner, Patrick, The Nature of Historical Explanation, Oxford University Press, London, 1952, Ch. 2 et passim.

"Of that which is not experience but the mere object of experience there can be no history. Thus there is and can be no history of nature..."(1)

The importance of this position is seen when Collingwood goes on to develop an implication of it, namely, that history becomes impossible when historical event is treated as natural event. This misconception can be seen to be the fundamental error underlying all of the misunderstandings of history which we have just described. Collingwood writes:

> Throughout this essay it has been necessary to engage in a running fight with what may be called a positivistic conception, or rather misconception, of history, as the study of successive events lying in a dead past, events to be understood as the scientist understands natural events, by classifying them and establishing relations between the classes thus defined. This misconception is not only an endemic error in modern philosophical thought about history, it is also a constant peril to historical thought itself. So far as historians yield to it, they neglect their proper task of penetrating to the thought of the agents whose acts they are studying, and content themselves with determining the externals of these acts, the kind of things about them which can be studied statistically. Statistical research is for the historian a good servant but a bad master. It profits him nothing to make statistical generalizations, unless he can thereby detect the thought behind the facts about which he is generalizing. At the present day, historical thought is almost everywhere disentangling itself from the toils of the positivistic fallacy, and recognizing that in itself history is nothing but the re-enactment of past thought in the historian's mind... (2)

(1) Collingwood, op.cit., p.302. Cf. Popper, op.cit., pp. 107, 143-147.

(2) Collingwood, op.cit., p.228. Cf. pp.292, 300. For a discussion of the naturalizing of history, and including its ill effects on theology, see Niebuhr, R.R., Resurrection and Historical Reason, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1957, Ch. IV.

This important position will be supported at length when we come to the setting forth of Collingwood's views as to the nature of genuine historical inquiry.

2. Collingwood's Understanding of History.

If history is neither chronicle, nor "pigeon holing", nor "universal history", nor "philosophy of history", nor prophecy, nor the description of objective facts; then what is it? The best way of answering this question is to build up a description as to how, in Collingwood's understanding, the historian works. This procedure will be especially useful as Collingwood's The Idea of History was published posthumously, and hence its statements are somewhat repetitive, and lack the coherence of his finished work. The material available is, however, quite adequate to build up a full picture of Collingwood's understanding of history.

a. Putting history to the question.

History begins when the historian "puts history to the question", i.e., when he approaches historical evidence with a specific question in mind. In this particular respect history is like science, for neither the historian nor the scientist passively receives the data in the hope of thereby learning something. Rather they approach their data with a specific question in mind. In both cases theory is prior to observation.

> The "scissors-and-paste" historian reads [his sources] in a simply receptive spirit, to find out what they said. The scientific historian reads them with a question in his mind, having taken the initiative by deciding for himself what he wants to find out from them...puts them to the torture, twisting a passage ostensibly about something quite different into an answer to the question he has decided to ask. (1)

It is a further characteristic of this technique that "Every step in the argument depends on asking a question... [which, together with the ensuing questions] must be asked in the right order!"(2) Moreover this dialogue of question and answer is:

> ...not put by one man to another man, in the hope that the second man will enlighten the first man's ignorance by answering them. They are put, like all scientific questions, to the scientist by himself. (3)

It is only in this way that the historian achieves the autonomy essential to scientific thought; the situation in which statements are made not upon the authority of another, but through one's own initiative, judgment and decision.

This approach to history is set forth not by one who was only theoretically interested in history, but who was also a practicing historian. The faithfulness with which Collingwood used this approach can be seen in his book Roman Britain and the

(1) Collingwood, op.cit., pp. 269-270. Cf. Popper, op.cit., p.98.

(2) Collingwood, op.cit., p.273.

(3) ibid., p.274.

English Settlements.[1] For example, at the beginning of Chapter III he considers the problem: Why did Caesar invade Britain in 55 B.C.? This question presents itself forcefully because the invasion was made late in the year and with an inadequate force. Moreover Caesar does not directly speak to this question. In trying to elucidate an answer to this problem Collingwood asks the following questions in the course of four pages: What motives did Caesar have for invading Britain? How long had he been formulating his plan of invasion? (These two questions make portions of Caesar's Commentaries germane to the problem, although they would not be so to one reading them passively.) What information can we obtain from the public reaction in Rome to Caesar's campaign of 55 and 54 B.C.? What gains could be expected from such an invasion? What light do Caesar's campaigns immediately before the invasion throw on the problem? What knowledge of Britain did Caesar have? What part could have been played by the traders who were known to pass back and forth between Britain and the Continent.[2]

As the reader follows this dialogue of question and answer he sees that it is not an arbitrary spinning of theories, although it is obvious that risks must be taken in such a process.

(1) Collingwood, R.G., and Meyers, J.N.L., Roman Britain and the English Settlements, 2nd edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1937. The first part of the book, which includes Chapter III, was written entirely by Collingwood.

(2) ibid., pp. 32-35.

Rather at each step the various possibilities are controlled by the available historical evidence. (Documents in this instance, but in other places full use is made of the findings of archaeology.) Moreover, any particular answer to a question must have a meaningful relation to the total situation with which the inquiry is dealing. Even in those instances when the question put cannot be answered, the problem has nevertheless been clarified to some extent by the fact that the question was put and thought through.

This is the process of "twisting a passage ostensibly about something quite different into an answer to the question he [the historian] has decided to ask." What is the net result? Not a twisting of evidence into deformity, but rather the twisting of the mute evidence of historical sources into a shape which can assume a meaningful place in the historical investigation.

b. There are no uncriticised data in historical investigation.

The foregoing statements give us an idea of how Collingwood conceives of the historian as he launches into his work; and with it we have an example from his book Roman Britain and the English Settlements. Now it remains to qualify and deepen what has been said.

We have spoken of the data (principly documents and the objects and findings of archaeology) and the use which is made

of data. However, in history there is no such thing as data; at least not as that term is commonly understood. This is because historical data (e.g., a certain statement by Thucydides concerning the Peloponnesian War) does not constitute a fixed and unchangeable point of reference.

> All that the historian means, when he described certain historical facts as his data, is that for the purposes of a particular piece of work there are certain historical problems relevant to that work which for the present he proposes to treat as settled; though, if they are settled, it is only because historical thinking has settled them in the past, and they remain settled only until he or some one else decides to reopen them. (1)

All data and all authorities are historically given, and therefore not final and binding. It is for this reason that:

> Whether he [the historian] accepts or rejects or modifies or reinterprets what his so-called authorities tell him, it is he that is responsible for the statement which, after duly criticising them, he makes. (2)

In this discussion of data we begin to see the divergence between history and science; a divergence which will become clearer later. While everything which has been said in the preceding paragraphs could well be applied to scientific procedure, yet it would not have the same relevance and urgency in such an application. Why is this? It is because of the greater prominence of the human factor in history as over against science.

(1) Collingwood, The Idea of History, p.244.
(2) ibid., p.244.

It is this human factor which "... is the ultimately uncertain and wayward element in social life and in all social institutions,"(1), and we might add, "in all of human experience".

Another way of indicating this difference between the "exact sciences" and history is to point out what has been implied in what we have already said, namely the difference in their starting points and conclusions.

> In exact sciences they [the starting points] are assumptions, and the traditional way of expressing them is in sentences beginning with a word of command prescribing that a certain assumption be made: 'Let ABC be a triangle, and let AB=AC.' In history there are not assumptions, they are facts...(2)

Historical facts or data are handled critically in the manner we have already discussed. These facts may be accepted in a very qualified sort of way as describing a particular and limited view of an historical situation; hence as being true, but not the whole truth. An example would be a document giving Jefferson Davis' opinion about the cause and purpose of the Americal Civil War. Such a document would be of great historical value even though it was obviously partisan and distorted. Plainly there is no genuine parallel between this and the assumptions and/or data which form the starting point in the "exact sciences".

There is also a divergence in these two types of discipline in that the conclusions are of a different nature. In historical

(1) Popper, op.cit., p.158. Popper's italics.
(2) Collingwood op.cit., pp.250-251.

inquiry, on the one hand, the conclusions relate to people and events having an exact location in space and time. When the historian moves away from working with particular events in time and space he invariably lapses into hopelessly banal generalization such as "Widespread and persistent discontent within a country eventually lead to social turmoil." On the other hand, the conclusions striven for in science are not limited to particular locations in space and time. "The progress of science has been a constant movement in the direction of subsuming known laws under laws of higher generality and of a consequently wider application."(1)

c. The use of necessary or a priori imagination.

With these characteristics of the use of historical data in mind, it now remains to see what use the historian makes of such data. Collingwood sees the historian dealing with them in terms of "necessary or a priori imagination". This has two characteristics.

First, it is necessary or a priori. For example, "...our authorities tell us that on one day Caesar was in Rome and on a later day in Gaul; they tell us nothing about his journey from

(1) Gardiner, op.cit., p.4. Cf. p.3: "...the notions of past and future...do not enter into functional explanation, as it occurs in the advanced sciences, at all; for there considerations of the time-order are superceded by considerations relating solely to structural order." Cf. also Collingwood, op.cit., p.251.

one place to the other, but we interpolate this with a perfectly good conscience."(1) This is a necessary action of the mind of the historian.

The second characteristic of this activity is that it is imagined. We find ourselves obliged to imagine Caesar traveling from Rome to Gaul; and without this activity, operating not capriciously as fancy but in its necessary form, history would be impossible. This activity of necessary imagination is not to be looked upon as a possible necessary yet nevertheless "risky" endeavour. Rather it often has the effect of criticizing and even refuting documentary evidence.

> The web of imaginative construction is something far more solid and powerful than we have hitherto realized...Suetonius tells me that Nero at one time intended to evacuate Britain. I reject his statement, not because any better authority flatly contradicts it, for of course none does; but because my reconstruction of Nero's policy based on Tacitus will not allow me to think that Suetonius is right... I find myself able to incorporate what Tacitus tells me into a coherent and continuous picture of my own, and cannot do this for Suetonius. (2)

Here we see that an imagined construction formed from data (in this case that of Tacitus) can refute other data. Notice that it is not a statement of Tacitus versus a statement of Suetonius; rather it is an imaginative historical construction based on Tacitus which leads to the rejection of Suetonius' testimony. Thus we see that the part played by imagination in history is

(1) Collingwood, op.cit., p.240.
(2) ibid., pp. 244-245.

more radical than is often realized. The following statement by Collingwood will serve well to summarize our argument here.

> The historian's picture of his subject, whether that subject be a sequence of events or a past state of things, thus appears as a web of imaginative construction stretched between certain fixed points provided by the statements of his authorities; and if these points are frequent enough and the threads spun from each to the next are constructed with due care, always by the a priori imagination and never by merely arbitrary fancy, the whole picture is constantly verified by appeal to these data, and runs little risk of losing touch with the reality which it represents. (1) (2)

At another place in The Idea of History Collingwood approaches this problem from a somewhat different point of view. He points out that history is inferential, i.e., that it is inferred from data. (Here we should keep in mind the way in which we have said data is to be treated in historical investigation.) It follows from this characteristic of history that the historian can exhibit his demonstration to anyone who is able and willing to follow it.(3)

(1) Collingwood, op.cit., p.242.

(2) Elsewhere (p.246) Collingwood places these three rules of method on imaginative historical construction. 1. The picture must be localized in time and space. 2. All history must be consistent with itself; chronologically, topographically and in more fundamental ways. 3. This historian's picture stands in a peculiar relation to his evidence. Of these three the first two are obvious; the third will be discussed in the immediately following paragraphs.

(3) Cf. Collingwood op.cit., pp. 251-253. Cf. the following: "If the test of objectivity is that there are regular ways of settling issues, by the use of which men of whatever party can be brought to see what actually happened, then I do not see how one can doubt the objectivity of history." J.A. Passmore, "The Objectivity of History", Philosophy, Vol. XXXIII, No.125, p.109. Quoted by Roberts, T.A., History and Christian Apologetic, S.P.C.K., London, 1960, p.146. Both Collingwood and Passmore assume of course that everyone concerned has accepted the presuppositions of historical thinking.

However there are different kinds of inference. Here we come again to a distinction between the "exact" and historical sciences. In the former inference is deductive. The clearest example of this is in mathematics where there

> is a kind of logical compulsion whereby a person who makes certain assumptions is forced, simply by so doing, to make others...he cannot make the initial assumption...go on thinking... [and] arrive at a conclusion different from that which is scientifically correct. (1)

History, on the other hand, is characterized by the inductive use of inference. In this method of inference we put certain observations together; and seeing that they form a pattern, the pattern is extrapolated. There is nothing in the pattern which logically necessitates this extrapolation; it is permissive in character, rather than obligatory. For example, Caesar is known to be in Rome upon a certain date, and also to have been with his army in Gaul a short time later. This, taken in conjunction with knowledge about roads, methods of travel and other matters leads the historian to inductively infer that Caesar passed through southern Gaul. But this inference is permissory and not obligatory.(2)

It might well be objected here that such inductive inference is virtually obligatory. Collingwood agrees that this is so; but points out that the distinction between the two types of

(1) Collingwood, op.cit., p.254.

(2) ibid., p.254.

inference is a real one; and secondly, suggests that the virtual compulsion of inductive inference proceeds from unquestioned and unrecognized assumptions about "certain religious beliefs about nature and its creator God."(1)

Unfortunately Collingwood does not develop this statement, and he could hardly have done so within the context of The Idea of History since such an endeavour would have carried him into the field of theology. There is only one other point in The Idea of History where Collingwood gives us any indication of what he had in mind in making this statement. He writes:

> To fancy that religion lives either below or above the limits of reflective thought is fatally to misconceive either the nature of religion or the nature of reflective thought. It would be nearer the truth to say that in religion the life of reflection is concentrated in its intensest form, and that the special problems of theoretical and practical life all take their special forms by segregation out of the body of religious consciousness, and retain their vitality only so far as they preserve their connection with it and with each other in it. (2)

Collingwood does not develop his idea beyond the stage which we find in this brief statement. It will be one of the principle aims of Part IV of this thesis to discuss this relationship between God and that area of reflective thought known as history.

(1) Collingwood, op.cit., p. 255.

(2) Collingwood, op.cit., p.315. Collingwood's discussion of the influence of Christianity upon the writing of history (pp. 46ff.) might be considered to be an elaboration of this statement. If so, it is purely implicit. (It is well to remind ourselves here that The Idea of History is a posthumous collection of unpublished material.)

and in that discussion we hope to throw some light on Collingwood's very interesting statement.

d. History as "re-enacted" experience.

In the total foregoing exposition of Collingwood's thought we have moved in a series of steps to the critical thesis of his conception of history. This is: history is relived experience; it is the "re-enactment" by the historian's thought in the present of the historical event which he is studying. This "re-enactment"deals with both the outward (Caesar invaded Britain in 54 BC,) and the inward (Why did Caesar invade Britain in 54 BC?) aspects of the event being studied. (This distinction between "inward" and "outward" is made by Collingwood only for purposes of analysis, for he is fully aware that it is impossible to discuss one in isolation from the other.)(1)

Let us review the steps up to this point. First we discussed history as it is frequently misconceived; misconceptions which eliminate any possibility of history being understood as "re-enacted" experience. Then we discussed the method by which the historian works; i.e., putting history to the question; the status of data in historical investigation; the use of necessary or a priori imagination and inductive inference. In each successive step the place of imagination properly understood has assumed a more prominent part.

(1) Collingwood, op.cit., pp. 282-302 et passim.

Now the question which has been before us all along, at least implicitly, is: How is the historian to know; how is he to understand the past? It is obvious that he cannot be an eye-witness. Further it has been shown that we cannot rely upon eyewitnesses or other authorities. Collingwood's solution to the problem of how the historian knows historical event is as follows:

> ...the historian must re-enact the past in his own mind...he must [for example in considering a passage of an ancient philosopher] see what the philosophical problem was, of which his author is here stating his solution. He must think that problem out for himself, see what possible solutions of it might be offered, and see why this particular philosopher chose that solution instead of another. This means re-thinking for himself the thought of his author, and nothing short of that will make him the historian of that author's philosophy. (1)

Let there be no misunderstanding, says Collingwood, that we are speaking here about the "re-enactment" of past emotion. The attempt to "re-enact" or relive past emotion is a dubious and historical useless procedure. Taking anger as an example, Collingwood says:

> ...the actual past anger of which I am thinking is past and gone; that does not reappear, the stream of immediate experience has carried it away for ever... (2)

The power which might recall this stream of immediate experience which included anger is the power of memory; but of memory and

(1) Collingwood, op.cit., pp. 282-283.
(2) ibid., p.293.

the stream of immediate experience there is no history. There is no historical study of "Napoleon's Anger" or "Goethe's Feelings". A study of such subjects, even supposing the necessary evidence existed, would be psychological or psychoanalytical, and not historical. Moreover this same inability to recapture past emotion applies to the emotional aspects of past acts of thought. "We cannot relive the triumph of Archimedes or the bitterness of Marius..."(1) But this is of no importance to Collingwood's understanding of history, for:

> ...the evidence of what these men thought is in our hands; and in recreating these thoughts in our own mind by interpretation of that evidence we can know, so far as there is any knowledge, that the thoughts we create were theirs. (2)

In order that it might not be thought that Collingwood is claiming too much, it is necessary to state another qualification to his understanding of history as "re-enacted" experience. It is this: Not only is it that we cannot and need not "re-enact" the emotions attendant upon a past act of thought; but we cannot and need not know other thoughts which may have been in the mind of the man whose thoughts we are seeking to "re-enact". Speaking of Euclid as an example, Collingwood says:

> ...in composing his proof of the [fifth] theorem he [Euclid] may have thought 'this theorem enables me to prove that the angle in a semi-circle is a right

(1) Collingwood, op.cit., p.296.
(2) Ibid., p.296. Italics mine.

> angle', and a hundred other things which it is just as impossible for us to know...but to say that because the theorem, as an act of thought, exists only in its context we cannot know it except in the context in which he actually thought it, is to restrict the being of thought to its own immediacy, to reduce it to a case of merely immediate experience, and so to deny it as thought. (1)

The past act of thought can never be known in its "immediacy", i.e., with the emotions and associated ideas present in the mind of, in this case, Euclid. But it can be known in its "mediacy", i.e., in the "re-enacting" of Euclid's process of argument.(2) Putting his position in a slightly different way, Collingwood says:

> It has been said that anything torn from its context is thereby mutilated and falsified; and that in consequence, to know any one thing, we must know its context, which implies knowing the whole universe. (3)

We have seen that Croce refers to this desire to know"the whole universe" as "the pursuit of a mad infinity".

The historian cannot "re-enact" past emotion, nor can he know the total context of thoughts in which the thought being investigated was originally formulated. In addition to these partial limitations upon history as "re-enactment", there are circumstances in which no "re-enactment" is possible. This happens when the historian

(1) Collingwood op.cit., pp. 298-299.
(2) Cf. ibid., pp.300-302.
(3) ibid., p.298.

> ...finds certain historical matters unintelligible,... [and thereby discovers] a limitation of his own mind; he has discovered that there are certain ways in which he is not, or no longer, or not yet, able to think. Certain historians, sometimes whole generations of historians, find in certain periods of history nothing intelligible, and call them dark ages; but such phrases tell us nothing about those ages themselves, though they tell us a great deal about the persons who use them, namely that they are unable to re-think the thoughts which were fundamental to their life. (1)

Two of the most common places in which we find this deficiency in contemporary writing are mediaeval history and the accounts of primitive societies. In the former we are often, for example, expected to share the author's moral indignation that the 12th Century was not motivated by a democratic egalitarianism. In the latter, primitive religion and magic are discussed from a point of view which indicates that the author has no conception of the aspects of existence with which such primitive practices attempted to deal. The sometimes "superior" tone of the anthropologist in such writings makes the reader wonder who is "superior" to whom. In both of these instances there is an obvious indication that the authors have chosen to deal with a subject about which, in certain fundamental aspects, they are not able to think. Unfortunately they have not "discovered" a limitation of their mind; they have simply indicated it.

(1) Collingood, op.cit., pp. 218-219. Cf. pp. 304-305, 327.

However, for the historian who is able to "re-enact" or rethink the past, the situation is entirely different. Instead of the dead shell of, say, mediaeval history from an unimaginative 20th Century point of view, we have various aspects of mediaeval life and thought "re-enacted" in the mind of the historian and (it is to be hoped) of the reader. In this way, "in so far as there is any knowledge", we have knowledge of these aspects of mediaeval life and thought. In this way the past, insofar as it is known historically, survives in the present. It is:

> Because the historical past, unlike the natural past, is a living past, kept alive by the act of historical thinking itself, the historical change from one way of thinking to another is not the death of the first, but its survival integrated in a new context involving the development and criticism of its own ideas. (1)

Thus, both past events and past modes of thought survive in the present.

This is a brief statement of Collingwood's concept of "re-enactment"; a concept which is central to his whole idea of history. "Re-enactment" consists in the critical rethinking of a self-conscious act(s) of thought expressed in the historical evidence which is under study. It presupposes the ability of the historian to enter into the thought which he is studying (i.e., that it is not "dark" to him); and it is done in the full

(1) Collingwood, op.cit., p. 226.

recognition that the emotional context and associated ideas of the event being "re-enacted" cannot be recovered. This whole understanding is elaborated and deepened as Collingwood proceeds to consider possible objections to his understanding of "re-enactment".

e. Objection to history as 're-enactment.'

The first objection to this theory which Collingwood considers is that of the person who maintains that it is impossible for the historian to rethink the thought of another person. Such an objector "maintains that although the object of two person's acts of thought may be the same, the acts themselves are different."(1) That is to say, in every cognitive experience there is an act and an object; and two <u>different</u> acts may have the same object. For example:

> If I read Euclid and find there the statement that the angles at the base of an isosceles triangle are equal, and if I understand what is meant and recognize that it is true, the truth which I recognize, or the proposition which I assert, is the same truth which Euclid recognized, the same proposition which he asserted. <u>But my act of asserting it</u> is not the same act as his; that is sufficiently proved by either of the two facts that they are done by different persons and are done at different times. (2)

Therefore, according to this objection, the historian's "re-enactment" of the process of thinking whereby Euclid was able to maintain that the angles at the base of an isosceles triangle

(1) Collingwood, <u>op.cit.</u>, p.288.

(2) <u>ibid.</u>, p.284. Italics mine.

are equal is not a revival of Euclid's act; rather it is the performance of another act of the same kind.

Collingwood then goes on to give a thorough and technical philosophical criticism of the object under consideration here,[1] the conclusion of which points out that this objection rests upon an impossible and self-defeating claim to know: (1) not only the object of another's thought (e.g., the proposition of Euclid which we have taken as an example), but also the act by which it is known; (2) to know the same object and act of thought in the historian's mind; (3) and finally to know that they are different. The objector's position rests on a claim to knowledge far greater than that which it seeks to deny.[2] Moreover, Collingwood continues, the claim implicit in this objector's position is that thought is <u>mere</u> object; and this position results in an impossible solipsism. Against this, Collingwood says:

> Thought can never be mere object. To know someone else's activity of thinking is possible only on the assumption that the same activity can be re-enacted in one's own mind...To reject this conclusion means denying that we have any right to speak of acts of thought at all, except such as take place in our own minds, and embracing the doctrine that my mind is the only one that exists. (3)

(1) Collingwood, <u>op.cit.</u>, pp. 285-288.

(2) <u>Cf.</u> <u>ibid.</u> p.288.

(3) <u>ibid.</u>, p.288

Collingwood's final comment on this is very characteristic: "Against anyone who accepts that form of solipsism I shall not stay to argue."(1)

Collingwood then turns to a second and more plausible objection to his understanding of history as "re-enactment". This objection is:

> ...we must be able not only to re-enact another's thought but also to know that the thought we are re-enacting is his. But so far as we re-enact it, it becomes our own; it is merely as our own that we perform it and are aware of it in the performance; it has become subjective, but for that very reason it has ceased to be objective; become present, and therefore ceased to be past. (2)

There are two points in this objection, says Collingwood. The first is that it is not enough simply to "re-enact" another's thought, for the historian must <u>know</u> that he is doing so. That is to say, historical thinking is a function of self-consciousness. In this Collingwood would agree.

The second point in this objection, and the one which Collingwood does not accept, can be expressed by saying that "although we can re-enact in our own minds another's act of thought, we can never know that we are re-enacting it."(3) But, Collingwood continues,

> ...this is an explicit self-contradiction. The objector confesses to a knowledge that something happens and at the same time denies that such knowledge is possible. He might try to remove

(1) Collingwood, <u>op.cit.</u>, p.288.
(2) <u>ibid.</u>, p.289.
(3) <u>ibid.</u>, pp. 289-290.

> the paradox by saying 'I did not mean that it does not happen; I only meant that, for all I know, it may; what I maintain is that, if it did, we could not know that it was happening'. And he might cite, as a parallel case, the impossibility of knowing that any two persons experience indistinguishably similar colour-sensations on looking at the same blade of grass. (1)

However, this parallel of the blade of grass is not exact. The objector is not saying that if we did actually achieve the "re-enactment" of an historical event, then some other circumstance would prevent us from knowing of our success. Rather, he is saying that if we did succeed in this "re-enactment", then the very fact of its happening would make us unable to know that it was happening. In the "re-enactment" the event has ceased to be past and objective and has become present and subjective.

This raises the question as to whether or not it is true that an act of thought by becoming present and subjective ceases to be objective and in a genuine relationship with the past; as, for example, when I "re-enact" one of Euclid's demonstrations. Collingwood's reply is that the two are not exclusive; the subjective and objective aspects of thought must necessarily remain together. He writes:

> The act of thinking, then, is not only subjective but objective as well. It is not only a thinking [subjective], it is something that can be thought about [objective]. But, because...it is never merely objective, it requires to be thought about in a peculiar way, a way only appropriate to

(1) Collingwood, op.cit., p.290.

> itself. It cannot be set before the thinking mind as a ready-made object, discovered as something independent of that mind and studied as it is in itself, in that independence. It can never be studied 'objectively', in the sense in which 'objectively' excludes 'subjectively'. It has to be studied as it actually exists, that is to say, as an act. And because this act is subjectivity (thought not mere subjectivity) or experience, it can be studied only in its own subjective being, that is, by the thinker whose activity or experience it is...Thus the act of thought in becoming subjective does not cease to be objective...(1)

Having answered this objection in the way in which we have briefly indicated(2), Collingwood goes on to point out that it rests on the assumption that subjectivity can only be the "consciousness [of] a flow of immediate states".(3), i.e., the subjectivity of feeling or immediate experience. But, as we have already stated, Collingwood maintains that such "feelings" are not a possible subject of historical inquiry. What he does argue for, at least in historical thinking, is an appropriate subjectivity of the act of thought (i.e., that which we find in "re-enactment"); a subjectivity which is at every point under the control of the critical use of historical evidence.

f. General considerations.

Now that we have an outline of Collingwood's understanding of history, together with a consideration of some possible objections to it, it is appropriate at this point to turn to several more general considerations.

(1) Collingwood, op.cit., p.292.

(2) We have present here a brief summary of the main points in Collingwood's argument; an argument which extends from pp. 289-302.

(3) Collingwood, op.cit., p.294.

First of all, it will be helpful to be very clear on the question: Of what can there be historical knowledge? The answer, implied in the foregoing discussion, is that there can be historical knowledge only of that which can be "re-enacted" in the historian's mind. Thus, while historical knowledge is knowledge of experience, we cannot have historical knowledge of everything we experience. This is so because there are certain areas of experience in which that which we experience is not the product of self-conscious thought, and "Of everything other than thought, there can be no history."(1)

This definition of that which constitutes a legitimate subject of historical study has been the cause of offence to a number of writers(2), and therefore Collingwood's position in this matter merits some further examination. To begin, what is excluded from historical investigation if we follow Collingwood's definition? The answer is: That which cannot be thought about in the process of "re-enactment". And what cannot be thought about in this process? The answer is that we cannot think about that which is not itself the product of self-conscious thought. Practically, this means that there can be no legitimate historical investigation of the three following areas. First, there can be no history of feelings, emotions, sensations etc. which

(1) Collingwood, op.cit., p.304.
(2) e.g., Roberts, T.A., History and Christian Apologetic, S.P.C.K., London, 1960, p.13.

are carried away by the flow of consciousness. Thus there can be no history of Field-Marshal Montgomery's temper. However, since I am unaware of any such history ever being attempted, Collingwood's point here is possibly somewhat academic.

Secondly, there can be no historical investigation of those areas or periods of history which cannot be "re-enacted" in the mind of the historian. Thus, for example, there are certain periods of the early Middle Ages of which there are such limited historical remains that the "re-enactment" of the self-conscious thought which took place at that time is impossible. But this is not the only possible cause of the historian being unable to "re-enact" certain historical events. It may also be caused by the historian being so alienated from the events under investigation that they remain "closed" or "dark" to him. Thus it is that the characterization of "dark age" applied to certain periods in history tells us virtually nothing about those periods, but it does tell us a great deal about those who make this characterization. Such characterizations are interesting "autobiographical" statements.

The third area which is not the subject of legitimate historical investigation, and the one which arouses the most protest, is that of nature. It is in this third area that Collingwood's contention that there can be no historical investigation of the purely objective is particularly relevant. There

is no history of that which is simply "out there".(1) Thus, for example, there can be no history of evolution.(2) All that we can do with the subject of evolution is to reconstruct, to some extent at least, a process which took place; formulate theories as to what took place; and perhaps extrapolate the results of this investigation into those places in the space-time continuum for which there is no relevant data. To inject such historical terms as "re-enactment", "purpose", "meaning", "intention" etc. into this process is neither good history nor good science. If, nevertheless, one wishes to so define history as to include this sort of investigation; then, by definition, it is history. However, it is difficult to see that anything but a state of confusion has been achieved.(3)

When Collingwood writes about the relationship between history and nature, or history and science, there is a polemical note present; and this accounts at least in part for the even

(1) Cf. McIntyre, op.cit., p.14; Berdyaev, op.cit., p.28.

(2) But there is nothing in Collingwood's position which precludes a history about what men have thought concerning evolution.

(3) The following passage from Herbert Butterfield is suggestive when placed alongside of Collingwood's insistence upon the separation of nature and history. "The God who brought his people out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, was to be celebrated pre-eminently as the God of History. It seems to have been when the Children of Israel lapsed into idolatry——gave themselves over to the worship of Baal, for example——that they turned rather to the God of Nature, glorify the forces of the physical universe and the fertility of the earth." (Christianity and History, p.9.) Collingwood's and Butterfield's ideas in this matter would make an interesting point of departure for an essay on Toynbee's use of quasi-biological consepts in history, and his syncretic approach to religion.

more polemical, and sometimes pointless, replies which his critics make when discussing this aspect of Collingwood's work. One cause of Collingwood's polemic here was in all probability that he saw himself embattled against the misleading practice of introducing quasi-biological concepts into historical inquiry, e.g., as in Toynbee. But the result of this situation has been a great deal of not very illuminating criticism of The Idea of History. For example, T.A. Roberts presents the following "powerful criticism" (sic) of Collingwood. "Moreover, there are surely occasions when the historian must take account of natural changes in the environment which have profoundly influenced human societies or states, and these natural changes cannot possibly be explained in terms of human motives or intentions."(1) But this "powerful criticism" completely misses the point. There is nothing in Collingwood which would preclude a history of how people and societies were influenced by weather, or how they thought about that subject. It is just that there cannot be a "History of Weather" or a "History of Wind in France in the 18th Century". That is the province of meteorology.

If these three areas, then, comprise that which Collingwood maintains is outside of historical inquiry, what is to be included? The answer to this is, quite simply, "Everything else." Although Collingwood does not mention him by name, he could very well have said with Vico that history is (with the exceptions

(1) Roberts, op.cit., p.13.

we have noted) the study of that which man has made. That which man makes is an expression of his self-conscious thought; and since it is such it presents to the historian the possibility of "re-enacting" that self-conscious thought. Included within this would be, specifically, written documents of an endless variety, all works of arts, the infinite variety of utilitarian objects with which the archaeologist is largely concerned etc. And these are the things with which the historians do in fact work.

So, Collingwood maintains, historical knowledge is possible of that which can be "re-enacted" in the historian's mind, i.e., of everything which is an expression of self-conscious thought. But now the further question arises: What does the historian bring to this "re-enactment". We have already answered this question to some extent by saying that he must be able to "re-enact" the event being investigated, i.e., the event or period under investigation must not be one which is "dark" to him; not one whose framework of belief and thought is so foreign as to be "unthinkable". If it is, then the historian should not make that particular investigation.

However, we need to give a more comprehensive anwer to the question of what it is that the historian brings to the evidence which is the subject of his investigation. To do this, it will be helpful to look back for a moment.

In our investigation of Croce we discussed this same matter in terms of "spirit". "Spirit", Croce says, is manifested or is active in specific acts of historical thought about concrete events or objects, e.g., a treatise, a painting, the record of a battle, a vase etc. It is this activity of "spirit" which is brought to bear upon historical events, and which enables us to discern the value (i.e., beauty, truth, usefulness) of these events. Without this activity of "spirit" manifested in thought the events of history would remain mute, unrelated and unenlightening. Implied in Croce's position is a concern for specific historical events, the necessity of being historical investigation with a problem, the use of controlled imagination etc. It is this whole complex attitude which the historian must bring to historical inquiry, and, borrowing a term from Rudolf Bultmann, we will refer to this attitude as the historian's "pre-understanding". It should be evident from our examination of Vico that much the same "pre-understanding" is also at work in that writer's historical inquiries; and this is true in spite of the fact that in Vico it was often implicit and uncritical.

In Collingwood we also find that the historian must bring a "pre-understanding" to his study; and moreover, we find that it is very similar to that which is manifested in Croce and (implicitly) in Vico. However, Collingwood avoids Croce's problematic term "spirit"; and instead Collingwood develops what we are calling the historian's "pre-understanding" in his own

way. Collingwood writes:

> The whole perceptible world, then, is potentially and in principle evidence to the historian. It becomes actual evidence in so far as he can use it. And he cannot use it unless he comes to it with the right kind of historical knowledge...Otherwise it is merely perceived fact, historically dumb. (1)

That which is needed if there is to be history is, in Collingwood's terminology, is a "criterion of historical truth"; and this criterion is "the idea of history itself". He writes:

> But neither the raw material of historical knowledge, the detail of the here-and-now as given him in perception, nor the various endowments that serve him as aids to interpreting this evidence, can give the historian his criterion of historical truth. That criterion is the idea of history itself; the idea of an imaginary picture of the past...It is not a chance product of psychological causes; it is an idea which every man possesses as part of the furniture of his mind, and discovers himself to possess in so far as he becomes conscious of what it is to have a mind. (2)

There is one obvious criticism to be made of this passage, but before doing that we need to develop its line of thought by asking: Where does this idea of history, i.e., this "pre-understanding", come from? His answer is as follows:

> It would be...sophistical to argue that, since the historical process is a process of thought, there must be thought already present, as its presupposition, at the beginning of it, and that an account of what thought is, originally and in itself, must be a non-historical account. History does not presuppose mind; it is the life of mind itself, which is not mind except so far as it both lives in historical process and knows itself as so living. (3)

(1) Collingwood, op.cit., p.247.

(2) ibid., p.246.

(3) ibid., p.227.

In short:

> ...historical knowledge can only grow out of historical knowledge; in other words...historical thinking is an original and fundamental activity of the human mind... (1)

To put this into its simplest terms, Collingwood is saying that it is impossible to answer the question as to the origin of historical thinking or the idea of history; or, possibly, that it is an "illegitimate" question. The obvious criticism of his position here is that there are thousands of highly civilized and sophisticated men for whom historical thinking is not "part of the furniture" of their minds; namely, those of India and China.(2) Nevertheless, Collingwood's statement here is true of all of those who participate in Western civilization;(3) and it is to be doubted that a more satisfactory statement about the "origin" of historical thinking can be given. And, at least to my knowledge, none has been offered. In part IV of this thesis we will return to this matter, discussing it in its relation to the origin of the idea of historically-given revelation.

(1) Collingwood, op.cit., p.247.

(2) The following illustrative story of this statement was told to me by the Rev. Herbert Sullivan upon returning from a recent visit to India. It seems that Hindu scholars in India, under the impact of Western civilization, have decided that it would be desirable to have a history of Hinduism. They have a vast amount of factual material, but at the present time they are at a loss as to how they are to turn these facts into the desired history.

(3) And it is arguable that this is all that Collingwood intended. Cf. The Idea of History, p.12: "Four thousand years ago, then, our forerunners in civilization did not possess what we call the idea of history." Once again it is well to keep in mind the fragmentary nature of the material which went to form The Idea of History.

Finally let us turn to the question which Collingwood asks in the Introduction to The Idea of History, but which we are in a better position to understand now at the end of this survey of his understanding of history. This question is: "What is history for?"(1)

> My answer is that history is 'for' human self-knowledge...Knowing yourself means knowing, first, what it is to be a man; secondly, knowing what it is to be the kind of man you are; and thirdly, knowing what it is to be the man you are and nobody else is. Knowing yourself means knowing what you can do; and since nobody knows what he can do until he tries, the only clue to what man can do is what man has done. The value of history, then, is that it teaches us what man has done and thus what man is. (2)

The full implications of this is stated later in the book when Collingwood says:

> Without some knowledge of himself [i.e., historical knowledge], his knowledge of other things is imperfect...Self-knowledge is desirable and important to man, not only for its own sake, but as a condition without which no other knowledge can be critically justified and securely based. (3)

And among the "things" of which our knowledge is imperfect apart from critical historical knowledge, is that of Christian theology. This is so because of the radical dependence of Christian theology upon certain events in time and space which, regardless

(1) Collingwood, op.cit., p.10.

(2) Ibid., p.10. [Italics Collingwood's.] Cf., our chapter on Vico, supra, in which we maintained that historical knowledge was only possible of that which man has made.

(3) Ibid., p.206.

of whatever else is done with them, have been and must continue to be historically received. Without a valid understanding of history and historical investigation, our understanding of these events will not be "critically justified and securely based". We will return to this in parts III and IV of this thesis.

Chapter V

THE UNITY OF VICO, CROCE AND COLLINGWOOD.

We have now concluded our exposition of the understanding of history found in Vico, Croce and Collingwood. Among these three men there is a unity of thought about history; a unity which is not confined to isolated points of agreement, but which pervades the thinking of each. As we have seen, Croce was influenced by Vico, and Collingwood was influenced by both; yet each man has written about history in his own distinctive way. In spite of the distinctiveness of each, and in spite of the great differences of style, the unity remains. In parts III and IV of this thesis we will examine this understanding of history in its relation to the many aspects of the Christian doctrine of revelation. In order to facilitate this examination it will be helpful to make explicit this unity of thought. I also wish to call attention to a few ideas which are more-or-less peculiar to each of these men (especially Croce), and which will play a part in our subsequent examination of revelation.

Opposition to false history. We have shown that all three men are consistently and vehemently (the word is not too strong) opposed to a variety of false histories which have surrounded and still continue to surround us, e.g., the history which has as its presupposition that the "ancients were men of matchless

wisdom" (Vico); chronicle and philology (Croce and Collingwood); "pigeon-holing" (Collingwood) etc. The fact that all three men were practising historians contributed to their thought in this area.

Opposition to the "philosophy of history". Vico, Croce and Collingwood's opposition to the "philosophy of history" is an aspect of their opposition to false history; a subject which we have just discussed. However, due to the prominent place of the "philosophy of history" in the following chapters, we wish to single it out for special attention at this point.

We have defined "philosophy of history" in a special way, and for that reason have enclosed the term in quotation marks. The term may be used simply in the very general sense of critical thought about history. However, following a rather widespread practice, we are using this term in the sense of the attempt to discover and impose a "meaning" upon the whole sweep of empirical historical events. The goal of this effort is to present a rationally coherent account of all historical events. Among the examples of this practice which we have cited, together with some indication of their failings, are those of Augustine, Marx and Toynbee. The fundamental failing of this practice is that it proceeds on the basis of a Cartesian dualism which assumes that the facts may be arranged, and then the interpretation of the facts may be sought out and applied to the facts.

How do the three historians whom we have studied stand in regard to the "philosophy of history". Vico was in fact opposing a "philosophy of history" when he attacked the practice, widespread in his day, of writing ancient history upon the basis of the assumption that the ancients were "men of matchless Wisdom". However, he was inconsistent in this matter, for he himself produced a "philosophy of history" which he characterized as an "ideal eternal history traversed in time by the histories of all nations". As for Croce and Collingwood, their opposition to the "philosophy of history" is so clear and emphatic that we need only mention it here.

Opposition to Cartesian dualism. In all three men the criticism of false history is tied up with the recognition that such histories are based on a strict Cartesian, subject-object epistemology, and that such an epistemology is inadequate for the study of history. Vico was among the pioneers in this criticism, and in this he is followed by Croce and Collingwood. Any submission to a throughgoing dualism between subject (historian) and object (historical event) is radically foreign to all three.

Imagination and "re-enactment". The converse of this Cartesian position is found in the understanding which sees the necessity of imaginatively but critically entering into the original event, and thus "re-creating" that event in one's mind;

e.g., the recovery of "poetic times" (Vico); "all history is contemporary history" (Croce); history as "re-enactment" (Collingwood).

The unity of Vico, Croce and Collingwood as to the necessity of imaginatively entering into the origin of events clearly implies that among all three there is agreement that "the nature of things is nothing but their coming into being at certain times and in certain fashions." (Vico) The only difficulty here is that Vico's stark "nothing but" is not explicitly contained in Croce and Collingwood. However, there is substantial agreement among all three in this matter.

If this process of "recovery" or "re-enactment" is to take place, then the historian must not stand passively before historical documents as does the chronicler. Rather he comes to his study with what we have chosen to term a "pre-understanding". This carries with it a respect for historical event, the necessity of questioning such events, the use of critical imagination etc. We have seen this clearly implicit in Vico's etymologizing (however imperfect), and then explicitly developed in Croce and Collingwood.

The unity of philosophy and history. If this imaginative-critical recreation is to take place, then history and philosophy must go hand-in-hand. They are mutually complementary. History cannot proceed without the exercise of systematic and critical conceptual reasoning. This reasoning (philosophy) must be

brought to bear upon the historical documents. Conversely, philosophy must avail itself of the help of history, i.e., of the historical study of the relevant documents. Included in this is the imaginative reconstruction of the thought of philosophers in its original context. Even contemporary, creative philosophy is based upon a philosophical tradition historically received.

Vico expresses this whole matter by stating that history (the certum) and philosophy (the verum) each fail by half when they do not have the assistance of the other. Croce continues this by stating that philosophy must be conceived as a methodology (not as a metaphysics) which is applicable to all fields of inquiry; and that this methodology is essentially historical. Collingwood's thought is very similar here.

This does not mean that philosophy as a "subject" disappears but only that the proper procedure for philosophy is an historical one. Included in this is the rejection of a philosophy of essence in favour of one of the development of historical forms, and hence one more compatible with an existential understanding of history. This understanding is particularly well developed in Croce with his rejection of any philosophy of essence, and his emphasis upon the development of historical forms in which "spirit" finds its expression. For Croce it is this thoughtful development of "spirit" in historical forms which constitutes the only source of value.

The unity of fact and interpretation. Closely allied to the unity of philosophy and history (as well as to much else of what we have said) is the insight that fact and interpretation occur together. Historical fact has no genuine existence, when by "fact" is meant bare, objective, uninterpreted occurrence. Its genuine historical existence consists in its being apprehended and integrated into an historical-experiential framework of meaning. Conversely, interpretation must always have reference to some historical fact or event. It is Croce who gives the most sustained and explicit development of this.

Up to this point we have summarized various aspects of the understanding of history upon which Vico, Croce and Collingwood are clearly in agreement. It is indeed a large area of agreement, and one which has its basis in their view that the task of the historian is that of the critical "re-enactment" of historical event. We now turn to three matters which will play an important part in the following chapters, but upon which agreement between our three authors is either not explicit or absent.

Man can only know that which he has made. The phrase is Vico's of course. To what extent is the same idea found in Croce and Collingwood? Neither discusses the matter in these terms. However, Croce's writings imply the acceptance of Vico's statement. First of all there is the emphatic rejection of anything which is transcendental or outside of history, i.e.,

outside of that which is made by man in history. Related to this is his belief that the only source of value is to be found in the historical forms which "spirit" has developed in the course of history. These forms are, of course, the creations of man; e.g., paintings, philosophic documents, governments etc. If this is the "only" source of value, then all else (the unmade) is without value. It would be safe to say that for Croce that which is without value (the unmade) is unknowable. Metaphysical speculation which is unrelated to historical-experiential forms is described by Croce as a "circling in the void".

Collingwood also follows Vico and Croce in this matter, although he expresses it in different and less elegant terminology. As we have seen, Collingwood's inquiry after knowledge lies in the "re-enactment" and interpretation of historic events, i.e., that which has been made by man.

> Knowing yourself means knowing what you can do; and since nobody knows what he can do until he tries, the only clue to what man can do is what man has done. The value of history, then, is that it teaches us what man has done and thus what man is. (1)

Thus there seems to be, in spite of different formulations, an essential agreement between Vico, Croce and Collingwood on the idea that "man can only know that which he has made".

No prophecy. An activity traditionally associated with history is prophecy. Vico dissociates himself from the Old

(1) The Idea of History, p. 10.

Testament and all else that might traditionally come under the heading of prophecy. Nevertheless, he does engage in prophecy in his account of the "ideal and eternal history". He was able to do this because he believed he had discovered the "end" of history (i.e., "the age of man"), and thus had a basis for making prophecies about the future.

However we have seen that Croce and Collingwood emphatically reject prophecy as an historical activity, and in our examination we have supported them against Vico in this matter. One cannot prophesize as an historian because to prophesize means to know the future or the "end" of history. But obviously the future or "end" of history——at least as commonly understood—— is imported from outside of history, e.g., the classless society, the Kingdom of God, progress(1) etc.

Providence. Finally we come to providence. Vico stands virtually alone among our three authors in dealing with this. We have examined at some length Vico's views on providence, and especially that interpretation which we have characterized as the "immanence of transcendence". For Croce providence is only "the rationality of history"; and Collingwood is mute.

This concludes our comparison of the understanding of

(1) Progress is an "end" which is distributed all along the historical "line," but which is always in the process of an even greater realization.

history found in Vico, Croce and Collingwood. We turn now to an examination of the understanding or epistemology of history found respectively in Bultmann and Tillich. We will also include in this examination other aspects of their work which is based upon their respective epistemologies of history. This investigation will be informed throughout by the results of the examination which we have just concluded.

PART III

TWO THEOLOGIANS:

THEOLOGY AND ITS RELEVANCE TO HISTORY.

"The truth is concrete."

Bertolt Brecht

Chapter VI

RUDOLF BULTMANN: HISTORY AND HERMENEUTICS.

1. The Problem of Historical Event and Historical Inquiry Raised by the Reality of Faith.

In an essay written in 1931[1] Rudolf Bultmann calls attention to a pervasive characteristic of contemporary life; namely, the fact that "supramundane reality has been called in question". It is this, according to Bultmann, which constitutes the "crisis in belief".

Now, although this situation is so widely recognized as to have become a truism, yet the effort to deal with it vigorously and creatively has not been an outstanding characteristic of contemporary theology. In the case of Bultmann, however, it is the recognition of this "crisis in belief" which has been the motivating force behind his theological work.

Bultmann sees the crux of this problem as being the rediscovery of an understanding of the proper function of history in the reality of faith as that is experienced within the Church. Within the Church, Bultmann says, the basis and possibility of faith is the revelation of Jesus as the Christ. But this revelation must not be conceived of as an empirical or historically verifiable event which has been established once and for all,

(1) Bultmann, Rudolf, Essays Philosophical and Theological, The MacMillan Co., New York, 1955, pp.1ff.

and upon which we may now lean as the object of our faith. It is historically verifiable beyond all reasonable doubt that Jesus of Nazareth lived and died; but the statement is not historically verifiable which says that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ through whom God has acted for me and all men. This latter statement is not historically verifiable because the historical events (Jesus of Nazareth lived and died) are given a transcendent reference (Jesus is the Christ through whom God has acted). After our study of Vico, Croce and Collingwood it should be clear that the assigning of transcendent reference to historical events is emphatically not the activity of the historian. In Bultmann's own words:

> In the Christian message [which includes the transcendent reference], however, there is absolutely no question of man's being given an historical account of a section of the past, which he might put to the test, or critically confirm or reject. He is told, on the contrary, that in what happened then, whatever the circumstances, God has acted, and that through this action of his the Word of divine judgment and forgiveness which now confronts him is authenticated; this action of God's is to be interpreted as the actual establishment of this Word——as the proclamation of this Word itself. No science of history can verify this assertion——either to confirm or to reject it; for it is beyond the sphere of historical observation to say that in this Word and its proclamation God has acted. (1)

If faith is not response to historically ascertainable

(1) Bultmann, op.cit., p.18.

events which have been established once and for all as the object of our faith, then just what is the nature of our faith? Bultmann describes it in this way. The basis and possibility of faith is the revelation of Jesus as the Christ. Faith in this revelation is exactly a decision for and obedience to its truth; and a decision for and obedience to its truth is faith. This decision to obedience is wrought by God; not by his working "objectively" apart from faith; not by giving us historically ascertainable events upon which we can lean; but by his working exactly in the faith decision.

> This decision...becomes a possibility only through the fact that God appears to man as He who is revealed in Jesus. Since this is so, the decision seems to be determined, but it is not. Admittedly, it is wrought by God, but not as if the working of God took place before faith or, so to speak, behind it; rather, God's working takes place exactly in it [the faith decision]. (1)

Another way of stating this is to say that one does not have knowledge of Jesus as the Christ apart from faith; apart from making in faith a decision to be obedient to its truth. Rather it is that the knowledge that Jesus is the Christ comes only with faith; comes only with the decision to be obedient to its truth. Moreover this faith or decision or knowledge does not take place once and for all. It cannot be objectivized. It must be renewed (relived, "re-enacted") again and again.

(1) Bultmann, Rudolf, Theology of the New Testament, II, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1955, pp. 76-77.

> But faith is not a once-for-all rationally acquired and henceforth possessed conviction, but is the overcoming of the world which must be done over and over again. (1)

When a man comes to a decision,

> The question is whether his new decisions are determined by his former decisions. If he is to be really free in his decisions then he must also be free from his former decisions, in other words from himself as he has become in his past. (2)

The difficulty with the Jewish position (against which Paul argues so strongly), and with much Christian practice for that matter, is just that it does not free man from his past.

> ...Jewish piety, the obedience under the law, is in reality a way of escaping from the genuine call of God, from decision. The pious Jew does not know that man has continually to become the one he is to be; he thinks——of course, implicitly——that he is already the one he is to become. For he has anticipated all decisions by his resolution to obey the law. The commandments of law take from him the decisions required by the situation he meets. (3)

To put this position in terms of our analysis in Part II, that in which one has faith is not repeatedly grasped anew (recreated, "re-enacted") in new situations; rather it is reduced to "chronicle", becomes a "thing believed in", is refined by philology (exegesis), and becomes a static norm of belief and action. Bultmann contrasts this with the position of the Christian who is freed from the past and becomes open to the future.

(1) Theology of the New Testament, II, p.79.
(2) History and Eschatology, Edinburgh University Press, 1957.
(3) ibid., p.44.

> To exist as Christian means to live in freedom, a freedom into which the believer is brought by the divine grace which appeared in Christ. The one justified by faith is set free from his past, from his sin, from himself. And he is set free for a real historical life in free decisions. This is made clear by the fact that the demands of God are summed up in the commandment of love, that is, in a commandment which does not consist in formulated statements...(1)

In terms of our analysis in Part II, this means that that in which we believe is recreated or "re-enacted" in our present historical situation; and the significance of our belief in this particular situation becomes manifest in this process of "re-enactment".

Bultmann deepens this position by stating that in his decisions man is fundamentally choosing "himself as the man he is to be".

> [The] history of the human person comes into being in the encounters which man experiences, whether with other people or with events, and in the decisions he takes in them. In these decisions man becomes himself...Therefore the life of a man is always one which stands before him and acquires its character as forfeited or as real by his decisions. What a man chooses in his decisions isbasically not this or that, but is himself as the man he is to be and intends to be, or as one who has forfeited his real life. (2)

Let us put this in the concrete terms of a serious disagreement with my child. I can decide to deal with this disagreement by forcing him to do my will. This is a decision to remain enslaved

(1) History and Eschatology, p.45.

(2) Ibid., pp. 43-44.

to my sinful nature, to my past; and including possibly a long standing and unsatisfactory relationship to my child. Or, knowing myself loved by God, I can decide to let that love guide my relationship to my child. This is to free myself from my past and to open the way to a new relationship with my child, myself, and God. In either decision I am deciding the kind of person I am to become. This is simply an example of what is traditionally known as the imitatio Christi. This is to be a "new being in Christ". Or, in Bultmann's terminology, it is "salvation-occurrence".

> In the "word", then, [which I receive and permit to guide me in my concrete decisions] the salvation-occurrence is present. For the proclaimed word is neither an enlightening Weltanschauung flowing out in general truths, nor a merely historical account which, like a reporter's story, reminds a public of important but by-gone facts. Rather, it is kerygma——herald's service——in the literal sense——authorized, plenipotent proclamation, edict from a sovereign...So it is, by nature, personal address which accosts each individual, throwing the person himself into question by rendering his self-understanding problematic, and demanding a decision of him. (1)

And this "salvation occurrence is the eschatological occurrence which puts to end the old aeon."(2) We need not commit ourselves to the radical realized eschatology of Bultmann in order to agree that this is "eschatological occurrence", i.e., that in such an occurrence Christ, so to speak, comes again——is present. This is a foretaste of the "last things".

(1) Theology of the New Testament, I, p.307.
(2) ibid., p.306. Italics Bultmann's.

The concrete and sometimes prosaic nature of the situations or events in which the "salvation-occurrence" or "eschatological occurrence" takes place should not obscure from us that this is taking place and that its nature is as we have described. We are not so much called upon to have faith in (make a decision of obedience to) Jesus the Christ in abstraction, as in the concrete events and encounters of life, e.g., in my relation to my child. Insofar as my relationship to my child is guided by Christian love, it is in the last analysis solely because of my faith in Jesus as the Christ. This faith arises as we have described, i.e., by my making that revelation a living experience within myself. Revelation meets faith and the Word of God appears in my life. The past revives in the present and guides that present.

This then is an indication of the problem of the proper function of historical event and historical inquiry in the experience of faith as that takes place within the Church.(1) First, and negatively, Bultmann states that historical inquiry cannot provide us with historically ascertainable facts upon which we can lean as the basis and object of faith. It is possible, at least theoretically, for the historian to affirm statements or facts of the order "Jesus of Nazareth lived in

(1) In the interests of greater clarity we are making the distinction between problems about historical event, and problems about historical inquiry, more explicit than Bultmann does.

Palestine"; but the Christian faith does not have its basis in statements of this order. Here it is very important to notice that this is a statement about the place of historical inquiry in the Christian faith; and therefore it cannot be construed as severing that faith from the historical events out of which it takes its rise. That this is in fact the case is supported by the second, and positive, affirmation which Bultmann's makes; namely, "that in what happened then, whatever the circumstances, God has acted".(1) This is a statement about the place of historical event in the Christian faith. Thirdly, and again positively, we have called attention to the suggestive parallel which exists (implicitly) in Bultmann between the way in which historical inquiry apprehends historical events, and the way in which the theologian apprehends "eschatological event", i.e., in both cases it is through a process of "re-enactment". Here we are again calling attention to the place of historical inquiry within the reality of faith. One of the recurring concerns of the remainder of this thesis will be to discuss the ways in which historical inquiry (historical "re-enactment") and theological inquiry (theological "re-enactment") are similar, and the ways in which they are distinctive.

(1) Essays Philosophical and Theological, p.18. Italics mine.

a. Demythologization: a misconceived controversy.

Bultmann's primary question, then, is: What is the proper function of historical event and historical inquiry in the experience of faith as that takes place within the Church? A second and subsidiary question is that of the status and function of the mythological language in which the Church has formulated its experience of faith; and, above all, in that formulation which makes up the Old and New Testaments. The desire to find a satisfactory answer to this question is a secondary but nevertheless important motivation of Bultmann's theological work. He writes:

> [The New Testament account of the event of redemption is expressed in] the language of mythology, and the origin of the various themes can be easily traced in the contemporary mythology of Jewish Apocalyptic and the redemption myths of Gnosticism. To this extent <u>the kerygma is incredible to modern man, for he is convinced that the mythical view of the world is obsolete</u>. We are therefore bound to ask whether, when we preach the Gospel today, we expect our converts to accept not only the Gospel message, but also the mythical view of the world in which it is set. (1)

In other words, a secondary motivation of Bultmann's theology is an unwillingness to add to the <u>skandalon</u> proper to the <u>kerygma</u> the additional <u>skandalon</u> of a mythical world-view. Of

(1) <u>Kerygma and Myth</u>, edited by H.W. Bartsch, S.P.C.K., London, 1957, p.3. Italics Bultmann's.

those critics who feel that they have dealt with this problem by a facile identification of Bultmann with Existentialism or Liberalism, there is hardly any need to speak. However, even in a careful and relatively sympathetic study such as L. Malevez's The Christian Message and Myth, one does not feel that the author has ever struggled inwardly (faced as a question for his own existence!) with the problem of the communication of the Gospel in the contemporary world. It is difficult to share the optimism of those who seem to believe that a reworking of Thomism or Calvinism, or another series of Biblical studies will answer the problem. All this would seem to be very obvious; yet in this controversy the awareness of it seems to be largely verbal.

A misconceived controversy. We have stated that Bultmann's primary concern was with the problem of the proper function of history (including questions both of historical event and historical inquiry) in the experience of faith; and we have indicated, among other things, that this function cannot be that of giving to us historically verifiable events which we can then lean upon as the object of our faith. In short, and as we will argue at length, a strict subject-object thought pattern is not appropriate to faith as it is experienced in the Church. We have also stated that the demythologization controversy is only a secondary and derivative concern. This is true in spite of the fact that the discussion concerning Bultmann has been con-

ducted very largely in terms of the merits and demerits of demythologization. Bultmann relates the two in the following way.

> If the challenge of demythologizing was first raised by the conflict between the mythological cosmology of the Bible and the modern scientific world view, it at once became evident that the restatement of mythology is a requirement of faith itself. For faith needs to be emancipated from its association with a world view expressed in objective terms, whether it be a mythical or a scientific one. That conflict is a proof that faith has not yet discovered the proper terms in which to express itself, it has not realized that it cannot be logically proven, it has not clearly understood that its basis and its object are identical, it has not clearly apprehended the transcendental and hidden character of the divine activity, and by its failure to perceive its own "Nevertheless" it has tried to project God and his acts into the sphere of objective reality. Starting as it does with the modern world view, and challenging the Biblical mythology and the traditional proclamation of the Church, this new kind of criticism is performing for faith the supreme service of recalling it to a radical consideration of its own nature. It is just this call that our demythologization seeks to follow. (1)

One reason why Bultmann's important contention as to the unsuitability of strict subject-object thinking for theological discourse has not received more attention, is that its importance is not as readily grasped as the question of the validity of New Testament mythological language. Another reason is that this aspect of Bultmann's effort often remains implicit rather than becoming explicit. Friedrich Gogarten has rendered a

(1) Bartsch, op. cit., p.210.

service to this whole controversy by making fully explicit this aspect of Bultmann's work. Gogarten writes:

> So long as one conducts one's thinking naïvely and unsuspectingly within the subject-object framework, failing to notice that in doing this one is relying on [the Cartesian] philosoph- oumenon which, in spite of its three hundred years of general acceptance, will certainly be sought for in vain in the New Testament, even in the passages which speak of the redemptive event having been seen and touched; and, fail- ing for the same reason to notice at all that this talk about self-understanding, and with it the attempt to achieve an existential interpre- tation, are directed towards the overcoming of this subject-object thinking, so long too will this total incomprehension [as to what Bultmann is trying to do] continue to assert itself... (1)

Gogarten goes on to put this in different and more general terms

> What Bultmann's opponents have failed to grasp is that the existential philosophy is concerned with the attempt to achieve a new understanding of the essential nature of history and that consequently it is towards an understanding of the historical character of the New Testament revelation in accor- dance with this essential nature of history that Bultmann's 'existential interpretation' is directed.(2)

The limitations of the Cartesian subject-object frame of reference are widely recognized, and in the field of theology these limitations are certainly evident. (3) The demythologi- zation controversy will certainly continue in its present incon- clusive confusion so long as we do not deal with the suitability

(1) Gogarten, Friedrich, Demythologization and History, SCM, London, 1955, p.56.

(2) ibid., p.56.

(3) For a recent discussion of this in relation to theology see Brown, James, Subject and Object in Modern Theology, SCM, London, 1955.

of the subject-object frame of reference for theological thinking. Therefore in dealing with Bultmann our focus will be upon this aspect of his thought, rather than upon the closely related but different and more particular problem of demythologization.

A further indication that this will be the most fruitful way to proceed was given to us in our examination of Vico, Croce and Collingwood. There we saw repeatedly the inappropriateness of subject-object thinking for historical inquiry. Vico, one of the earliest critics of the Cartesian epistemology, saw that the criterion of "clear and distinct ideas" left no room for historical inquiry.(1) In Croce and Collingwood there is the recurring theme that history is not constituted in the collecting, "pigeon-holing", or arranging into "philosophies of history" of objective facts which have a significant (i.e., historical) existence apart from the historian. Rather, as we discussed at length, the facts and events of history must be "re-enacted" or recreated in the imagination of the historian; the historian must, so to speak, participate in the history which he writes, i.e., he does not stand apart from his historical evidence as a subject to an object. Here we see an indication of the relevance of Vico, Croce and Collingwood to the work of Bultmann; a relevance which it will be the task of this chapter to explore at length.

(1) see <u>supra</u>, pp. 111ff.

In the interests of forestalling criticism let it be said that there is no reason why this sympathetic approach to Bultmann need commit us beforehand to Existentialism of any variety (i.e., to the existential thinking of some particular philosophical system) nor even to an existential thinking (the existentiell thinking which belongs to existence as such) which implies that other types of thinking are totally excluded. (Wingren, commenting upon this distinction, characterizes existential as theoretical, and existentiell as ethical and religious.)[1] Rather this approach is taken in the hope that it might throw light upon the nature of historical thinking, and especially the place of historical thinking in theology. The fundamental motive behind this attempt is the desire to communicate the kerygma in the contemporary world. Here we say "in the contemporary world" and not "to the contemporary world"; for it is not the case that we stand apart from that world. "Contemporary world" and "contemporary man" always mean, first of all, "my world" and "myself".

2. The Problem of Hermeneutics.

The problem of hermeneutics is the problem of "how to understand historical documents delivered by tradition".[2]

(1) Wingren, Gustav, Theology in Conflict, Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, 1958, p.61.

(2) History and Eschatology, p.110.

Every interpretation of historical documents is based upon certain hermeneutic presuppositions. One way of describing Bultmann's total programme would be to state the question which runs throughout his work: What hermeneutic presuppositions are to be used to guide the interpretation of those historical documents included in the Old and New Testaments? Obviously for Bultmann these presuppositions will not be those appropriate to the Cartesian subject-object approach to historical documents, i.e., the approach which we discussed in the previous section under headings such as "chronicle", "philology" and "universal history". In this strict subject-object approach, historical event has its full reality as an object apart from the historian (the subject); and within such a framework the historian may then proceed to refine his perception of this objective event, as in philology; to classify it, as in chronicle or "pigeon holing"; or to impose a subjective meaning upon it, as in the "philosophy of history" and in schemes of universal history. If Bultmann rejects this answer to the problem of hermeneutics, what does he put in its place?

a. Is Biblical hermeneutics a special hermeneutics?

Turning to Bultmann, now, we should notice how first of all he maintains that Biblical hermeneutics is not a special hermeneutics.

> ...biblical hermeneutics does not seek to represent itself as an independent and self-contained science, but has as its presupposition hermeneutics in general...(1)

Biblical hermeneutics is not a special and esoteric form of historical knowledge, but rather forms a part of hermeneutics in general. There is not a dichotomy in the world in which the Bible is understood in one way, and all other historical documents in another and totally different way. This means that insofar as the understanding of history found in Vico, Croce and Collingwood is valid, its validity extends to the documents of the Old and New Testaments. In the following investigation we will find that we wish to go beyond this identification of Biblical and general hermeneutics; or better, we will want to make explicit certain qualifications of this view which are only implicit in Bultmann. However, we will not want to subtract from or contradict this understanding. But, before we can do this, it will be necessary to give some detailed explanation of Bultmann's hermeneutics.

b. Historical knowledge arises out of the original situation

Bultmann says, first of all, that the interpretation of historical evidence is possible only through the knowledge and acceptance of the age in which these events first took place, and of the persons who first discovered and experienced them.

(1) Von Hoffman, J. Chr. K., Biblische Hermeneutic, 1880, p.1 ff. Quoted by Bultmann in Essays Philosophical and Theological, p.241.

He expresses this negatively in distinguishing himself from Harnack and the liberal school.

> For the liberals the great truths of religion and ethics are timeless and eternal, though it is only within human history that they are realized, and only in concrete historical processes that they are given clear expression. But the apprehension and acceptance of these principles does not depend on the knowledge and acceptance of the age in which they first took shape, or of the historical persons who first discovered them. We are all capable of verifying them in our own experience at whatever period we happen to live. History [for the Liberals] may be of academic interest, but never of paramount importance for religion. (1)

Bultmann gives a positive expression of his own position in such passages as the following in which he says in effect that the origins of anything explains much of its character or nature. Speaking of New Testament interpretation, he writes:

> We must make visible the whole field of conditions and possibilities in which independent and significant theological phenomena arise and out of which the theological and ecclesiastical forms of the early Church gradually grow. (2)

Commenting on this aspect of Bultmann's work, Gustav Wingren writes:

> [It becomes] clear that we can understand the various types (types of piety, preaching, organization etc.) only in the light of history. They have all originated in definite historical situations, which explain much of their structure. (3)

(1) Kerygma and Myth, p.13.

(2) New Testament Theology I, p.64. Italics Bultmann's.

(3) Theology in Conflict, pp. 164-165.

This of course brings to mind Vico's understanding that the truth or validity (verum) of anything must be informed by knowledge of its historical origins (certum); and that conversely the original historical event (certum) must be informed by a critical, rational examination of that event (the verum). Or to put it differently, event and interpretation must proceed side-by-side; a matter to which we turn now.

c. "Pre-understanding" and questioning.

When the historian or theologian approaches the event, person, doctrine etc. in its original situation, he does not do so passively. Rather, on the basis of some "pre-understanding" the historian directs a question to that which he wishes to understand more fully; he is

> ...guided by a certain interest, a certain putting of the question: What is my interest in interpreting the documents? Which question directs me to approach the text? It is evident that the questioning arises from a particular interest in the matter referred to, and therefore that a particular understanding of the matter is presupposed. I like to call this a pre-understanding. (1)

This "pre-understanding" is understood first of all and most obviously as the emphasis which the historian wishes to make, e.g., political, economic, Protestant and so on. Such specific emphases are false only when looked upon as exhausting the mean-

(1) History and Eschatology, p. 113. Italics Bultmann's.

ing of any event.(1) However this "pre-understanding" is more radical than being merely the selection of an emphasis or viewpoint.

> Already in choosing a viewpoint there is at work what I may call the existential encounter with history. History gains meaning only when the historian stands within history and takes part in history. As R.G. Collingwood says: the object of historical knowledge is 'not a mere object, something outside the mind which knows it; it is an activity of thought, which can be known only in so far as the knowing mind re-enacts it and knows itself as so doing...' (2)

This means that the historian not only chooses a viewpoint, but that he also enters into a relationship with or encounters the event which he is studying. Implied in this is the fact that he does not encounter the event passively, but that he must be receptive to the event; and this in turn implies that he must have some "pre-understanding" of it. Then, on the basis of this "pre-understanding" he, to use Collingwood's phrase, "puts history to the question". Of course as a result of this questioning he must be prepared to revise his "pre-understanding", even very radically if necessary. However, without this "pre-understanding", out of which a question or questions are formulated about the event being investigated, the process of historical investigation cannot even start. "Without such a <u>prior understanding</u> and the questions initiated by it, the texts are

(1) Cf. <u>History and Eschatology</u>, p.118.

(2) <u>ibid.</u>, p.119.

mute."[1] It is this same essential process which takes place in those scientific experiments in which, on the basis of a pre-understanding, a number of controlled factors are brought together; and then the question is asked of the experiment: Will A, B, C, or some other result ensue. In any area of critical investigation the subject of study must be "put to the question".

It follows from this that the knowledge of God which is received through the interpretation of (or encounter with) Biblical texts (or in any other way) is never received passively or in a vacuum; but that it is received as a result of questioning based upon a "pre-understanding". Bultmann writes:

> ...the comprehension of records about events as the action of God presupposes a prior understanding of what may in my case be termed the action of God—— let us say, as distinct from man's action, or from natural events. And if this is countered by saying that neither can man know who God is before his manifestation, nor, consequently, what God's action may be, then we have to reply that man may very well be aware who God is, namely, in the inquiry about him. If his [man's] existence were not motivated (whether consciously or unawares) by the inquiry about God in the sense of the Augustinian 'Tu nos fecisti ad Te, et cor nostrum inquietum est, donec requiescat in Te', then neither would he know God as God in any manifestation of him. In human existence an existentiell knowledge about God is alive in the form of the inquiry about 'happiness', 'salvation', the meaning of the world and history; and in the inquiry into the real nature of each person's particular 'being'. (2)

This "pre-understanding" which we bring to the interpretation of the New Testament does not derive only from our inquiry

(1) Essays Philosophical and Theological, p.253. Italics Bultmann's. Cf. Kerygma and Myth pp. 191-192.

(2) Essays Philosophical and Theological, p.257. Italics Bultmann's.

as to "the meaning of the world and of history". It also arises out of the knowledge of God which comes to us out of our encounter with the events recorded in the Old Testament.(1) Bultmann does not express himself explicitly as to the part which the Old Testament plays in forming the "pre-understanding" with which we, and especially the earliest Church, approach the event of the Christ. At the very least Bultmann would have to say that the Old Testament is part of the general inquiry as to "the meaning of the world and of history". But regardless of what Bultmann would say, the events of the Old Testament have a very special place in that general inquiry, and the following passage (the exact reference of which is obscure) does, or should have, particular reference to the Old Testament.

> Nor do I deny that we can know the true nature of eschatalogical existence only through God's revelation of himself in Christ. Our previous knowledge of it was but ignorance and error, but it was <u>not purely negative</u>, otherwise the revelation could not convey any real knowledge. That revelation would not be a life-shattering event, but merely the imparting of information on the subject.(2)

In terms of the Old Testament we may say that the revelation of God which came out of the experience of the Exodus was permeated by "ignorance and error"; but we cannot say that that revelation was "purely negative". For example, we cannot say that the Jew's understanding of God as being <u>their</u> God and as being

(1) This is traditionally expressed by, in one way or another, subsuming the Old Testament revelation under the revelation in Christ.

(2) <u>Kerygma and Myth</u>, p.107. Italics mine.

a providing God, was a "purely negative" understanding. Further, Bultmann would say that this understanding was part of the "pre-understanding", however imperfect, which enabled the Jews to receive the Christ as a "life-shattering event". Without this "pre-understanding" the revelation would have remained mute for there would have been no basis upon which to receive it.

One might counter this position by saying that God could have prepared the hearts of people to receive the Christ under any circumstances. This is only a "pious" and highly abstract theory which is completely divorced from the historical events of 1st Century Palestine. It is not a question of what God could do (that is completely abstract), but what he did do. What he did do was to give to the Jewish people a "pre-understanding" which enabled certain persons among them to receive the Christ as a "life-shattering event". To say this in no way impairs the sovereignty of God; it merely says that historically God chose to act in this way.

If a "pre-understanding" was necessary to receive the Christ then it would follow that some "pre-understanding" must always have been present when revelation was received. When then was the absolute beginning of revelation? This is a question which it is impossible to answer. We can only say here, perhaps mythologically, that God has always been with mankind; in a way which was marked by ignorance and error, but which was not purely negative. This is not a "pious" theory projected back upon the

past; rather it would seem to indicate something of the historically grounded dynamics of revelation.

We have here a close parallel with the section in our chapter on Collingwood where we discussed the question: What does the historian bring to his data?(1) We said there that he brings historical knowledge and technique to the data; and without this the data is mute, unrelated and unenlightening fact. However, to the extent that the historian can bring historical thinking to bear upon his data, to that extent it can be incorporated into a comprehensible historical picture. This previous historical understanding and technique may be permeated with ignorance and error, and hence it must always hold itself open to correction in the process of the historical investigation. But this previous understanding and technique is not purely negative. It may be incorporated into the results of the investigation in a modified and corrected form; or, at the very least, it is not purely negative in the sense that without it the process of historical thinking cannot begin. The ability to do this might well be termed a "pre-understanding", i.e., the "pre-understanding" of the nature and necessity of historical thinking, together with the fruits of that thinking in the past. And where does this "pre-understanding" come from?

(1) see supra, pp.220ff.

> It is not a chance product of psychological causes; it is an idea which every man possesses as part of the furniture of his mind, and discovers himself to possess in so far as he becomes conscious of what it is to have a mind. (1)

The temperature of Collingwood's statement is much cooler than Bultmann's[2], but this is very close to what the latter means by "existential". For Collingwood historical thinking with its imaginative recreation of the events of history is "existential"; it is part of "the furniture of his mind"; and man discovers himself to possess it in so far as he becomes conscious of what it is to have a mind.

When did the ability to think historically originate? Or, to put it differently: When did the "pre-understanding" necessary for historical thinking originate? As we discussed earlier, it is impossible to answer this question; just as it is impossible to answer the parallel question in Bultmann: When did the "pre-understanding" necessary for the reception of the revelation of God originate? As in Bultmann revelation must grow out of revelation, so in Collingwood:

> ...historical knowledge can only grow out of historical knowledge; in other words, that historical thinking is an original and fundamental activity of the human mind...(3)

(1) Collingwood, The Idea of History, p.248.

(2) For Bultmann's evaluation of Collingwood (and Croce) in this matter see: History and Eschatology, pp. 136, 142-147.

(3) Collingwood, op.cit., p.247.

And elsewhere:

> History does not presuppose mind; it is the life of mind itself, which is not mind except so far as it both lives in historical process and knows itself as so living. (1)

As long as man has been man, he has been historical man. (The extent to which this must be a process in which mind self-consciously "knows itself as living" is not of crucial importance.) Similarly in Bultmann, as long as man has been man he has "been aware who God is...in the inquiry after him." It is this "not purely negative" inquiry, together with its results, which is the "pre-understanding" which enables the event of the Christ to be received as a "life-shattering event".

However, this parallel between theological "pre-understanding" in Bultmann and historical "pre-understanding" in Collingwood must be qualified. The difficulty lies, as we said earlier in our examination of Collingwood, in the ambiguity of Collingwood's statement that "historical knowledge is an original and fundamental activity of the human mind". If this is meant to apply only to those who have been a part of Western civilization during the Christian era, then we would agree with Collingwood. At one point, but only at one point, Collingwood says that this is his meaning.(2) If, on the other hand, the statement is meant to apply to all men, including those of

(1) Collingwood, op.cit., p.227.

(2) Cf. ibid., p.13.

Greco-Roman civilization and of contemporary Eastern civilization, then it is difficult to see how the statement can be substantiated. Faced with this ambiguity we will assume that Collingwood's position is the former of these two possibilities, and having made this assumption, we will agree with him.

This brings us to another related difficulty in the parallel which we are ~~having~~ describing between "pre-understanding" in Collingwood and Bultmann. This lies in the fact that the theological "pre-understanding" described in Bultmann is meant to apply to all men at all times; but that the historical "pre-understanding" described in Collingwood applies only to those who participate in Western civilization. In Part IV of this thesis we will argue that the historical "pre-understanding" of which Collingwood speaks is a derivative of the theological "pre-understanding" that has been developed within the Hebrew-Christian theological tradition. However, having admitted these difficulties, it still remains true that there is a significant parallel between the part played by "pre-understanding" in theological and in historical inquiry. And of course, if historical inquiry is in fact derived from Hebrew-Christian theological inquiry, then this parallel should not come as a surprise to us.

In concluding this section on "Pre-understanding" and questioning, it will be helpful to broaden its applicability. When Bultmann takes this position he has in mind primarily the interpretation of the New Testament. At other places he states

that this approach plays its part in the understanding of any historical document. However, it is also applicable, with slight modifications, to those who participate in the original historical event. For example, the earliest Church came to formulate the kerygma as a result of participating in the "conditions and possibilities" of the historical process of their own day; their experience of the Christ, and the interpretation of that experience, proceeded side-by-side. This experience and its interpretation, which later was recorded in the New Testament, was informed throughout by the knowledge and acceptance of the age in which the events took place, i.e., the knowledge and acceptance of the presuppositions and thought forms of their own age. In other words, the way in which we today experience and interpret the event of the Christ as it is recorded in the New Testament is not essentially different from the way in which the earliest Church experienced and interpreted that same event. Both the contemporary theologian (or simply, believer) and the original participant (e.g., Peter) stand in essentially the same situation; for both must engage in essentially the same process of questioning based upon an historically delivered and conditioned "pre-understanding". In both cases it is this Spirit directed process which enables the kerygma to be received as a "life-shattering event". This similarity is, in fact, implied at many placed in Bultmann's work; and this is just what we would expect from a hermeneutic which strives to make visible (to understand, to "re-enact")

the whole field of conditions and possibilities which made up the original revelatory situation.

d. The relation of Biblical and general hermeneutics reconsidered.

We have examined Bultmann's understanding of Biblical and general hermeneutics; and we have noted his consistent rejection of the Cartesian dualism between event and interpretation, or knowledge and faith. With this background it now remains to re-examine Bultmann's distinction between Biblical and general hermeneutics.

Bultmann writes: "The interpretation of biblical writings is not subject to conditions different from those applying to all other kinds of literature".(1) Yes, we will agree with this. However, this formulation of the problem will not stand without qualification. And in fact, Bultmann does not proceed as if it were enough to say only this. For example, we have called attention at several places to Bultmann's refusal to let the kerygma be dependent upon historically ascertainable events which exist apart from faith. Now it is to just such events existing apart from faith that general hermeneutics is perfectly applicable and quite sufficient. But Bultmann will not let the kerygma be dependent upon this approach to knowledge, i.e., it is not sufficient in itself for the study of the Old and New Testaments. This is

(1) Essays Philosophical and Theological, p.256. Italics Bultmann's.

how he proceeds, but he is not careful to make this explicit when he is being self-conscious about the problem of hermeneutics. The reason for this seems to be that Bultmann is preoccupied with a welcome and much needed polemic which sets forth the many points of similarity between Biblical and general hermeneutics, e.g., that both proceed on the basis of a "pre-understanding", both engage in a process of questioning, in both there is a unity of event and interpretation and so on. (This is not the only instance in which the preoccupation with a polemic leads Bultmann to make statements subject to misinterpretation.) Let us see what qualifications must be made to the statement that Biblical and general hermeneutics are not subject to different conditions.

When we say that Biblical and general hermeneutics are the same we mean at least that both are historical inquiries. This does not mean, of course, that the results are the same. Hermeneutic principles can be used in such a way as to yield theology; they can also be used to produce social history, political history, a history of aesthetics etc. A single event or series of events, e.g., the Exodus, lends itself to a variety of treatments including that of the anthropologist, the historian of religions, and the theologian. In each treatment the same hermeneutic principles are adapted for a different use; and each becomes false only when it claims to exhaust the meaning of any/

particular

event. For example, the results of Biblical hermeneutics cannot claim to exhaust the meaning of the historical event of the Exodus. To make such a claim, against the psychologist and anthropologist say, is simply arrogance.

Another way of expressing this is to say that each discipline has modified the principles of hermeneutics in a way appropriate to that particular discipline. In very simple terms, the anthropologist, the historian of religions and the theologian who were respectively studying the Exodus would each ask a different series of questions of that event. Yet, as we have discussed, each must engage in the questioning process, each must permit event and interpretation to control one another, and each must derive his results from that event. Each inquiry would be an historical inquiry proceeding upon the same principles of hermeneutics. Yet when we have said this about the theologian, and we do not intend to retract any of it, we have not said everything that must be said. What are the distinctive additions, and hence modifications, to the principles of general hermeneutics which are appropriate to the theologian using Biblical hermeneutics?

Here we have a large and difficult question, but it would certainly include the following two modifications. The first of these we would state in the following way. There is a "pre-understanding" of God which, however permeated with "ignorance and error", is not "purely negative". This "pre-understanding"

both gives rise to and finds expression in the explicit inquiry as to "the meaning of the world and history; and...the real nature of each person's particular being."; an inquiry which has always found historical expression and which can be historically studied. The nature of this inquiry may be further indicated by stating that it speaks mythologically of the "beginning" and the "end" of the historical process, and of the place of the individual who finds himself between this "beginning" and "end". Or, still another way of characterizing this inquiry is to use Paul Tillich's terminology and say that in this inquiry we explicitly ask questions which are of "ultimate concern" for us.(1)

Now this process of coming to the study of historical events with a "pre-understanding" of God, of using this "pre-understanding" as a basis for asking questions of those events which explicitly deal with "the meaning of the world and history; and... the real nature of each person's particular being."——this process is distinctive to Biblical hermeneutics.(2) In contrast to this, we have discussed in varying terminology the "pre-understanding" which enables the historian of any subject to recreate the events being studied, and thus to apprehend them historically. This apprehension reveals to the historian knowledge about man, his capabilities and nature. However, it does not reveal an answer

(1) See p. 334ff., infra.

(2) In Part IV we will discuss how the ordinary historian implicitly deals with these questions.

as to "the meaning of the world and history; and...the real nature of each person's particular being." In most cases it is obvious that no such knowledge is sought for or attained, e.g., in inquiries about specific historical events, architecture, the English feudal system etc. However, other fields of inquiry, e.g., certain schools of psychology, yield such a great insight into the nature of man that its practitioners are sometimes tempted to essay answers as to the goal and meaning of history. These attempts, and this is often admitted, do not arise out of the particular disciplines as something which is integral to them; rather they are imposed upon the disciplines. The verum in such attempts is not controlled by the factum. The frequent practice of placing such attempts in concluding chapters testifies to this appended and extrinsic character.

This then is the first modification of general hermeneutics to be found in Biblical hermeneutics; namely, its explicit dealing with the Biblical documents in such a way as to throw light upon the comprehensive problem of the meaning of history, and the real nature of each person's particular being. However, when we say this we must not forget that in Biblical hermeneutics as in general hermeneutics there is the same functional role played by "pre-understanding"; the same questioning of historical event; the same necessary unity of event and interpretation; and the same demand that the results of the investigation arise out of the event, and are not imposed upon it.

The second modification of general hermeneutics which we must call attention to is that in Biblical hermeneutics certain historical events have a transcendent reference. For example, in the events of the Exodus there is discovered the operation of a God who judges, guides and provides for His people. This God is seen nowhere else but in these events and in his people's reception of these events; yet this immanence does not exclude the transcendent reference. In the Exodus two factors are at work: first, the "pre-understanding" or search of the Hebrews for God; secondly, the events of the Exodus which enabled the Hebrews to see in these events (and nowhere else) He who is their God. Let us repeat that the "pre-understanding" (i.e., the search for and "not purely negative" understanding of God) which is at work here came itself from a former revelation of God and that it is impossible to speak meaningfully about the beginning of this "pre-understanding".

Now in this second characteristic peculiar to Biblical hermeneutics, i.e., the transcendent reference of historical events studied in Biblical hermeneutics, we have a characteristic which decidedly sets it apart from general hermeneutics. But, once again this is not an absolute distinction between Biblical and other forms of historical inquiry. For example, a study of Impressionistic and post-Impressionistic painting (certainly not overtly religious) would make reference to certain factors which find expression in the paintings, and yet which transcend

those paintings. These factors transcend color, volume and form; and yet they are found nowhere else but in that color, volume and form. However, this similarity is only analogical; for the aesthetic qualities which transcend color, volume and form do not transcend this world. In such a study a consideration of Van Gogh's "Sunflowers" would give us a perception of those flowers and of their beauty which cannot simply be reduced to color, volume and form, i.e., it transcends those factors. Yet that beauty has no existence apart from this world. Or to put it in other words, that beauty which transcends the painting has been entirely created by the artist; but the reality which Biblical hermeneutics discerns transcending the events of the Exodus were perceived and formulated by man, but certainly not created by man. This radical transcendental reference of those events which are the subject of Biblical hermeneutics, as contrasted with the limited and analogical "transcendental reference" of other types of hermeneutics, forms a distinctive characteristic of Biblical hermeneutics.

Bultmann recognizes this special characteristic of Biblical hermeneutics when he protests that the kerygma cannot be supported by historically ascertainable events which exist apart from faith. Now this is another way of saying that the general hermeneutics appropriate to historical events, and by which they are historically perceived, are not adequate for the events of the kerygma. Why? Because they, in contrast to Biblical hermeneutics, are not adequate to deal with the radical transcen-

dental reference which is a part of Biblical events. It is this transcendental reference which, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, must be appropriated in faith and decision. Once again this is not without analogies in general hermeneutics; but it is vain to maintain that the kind of faith and decision which the historian of art or politics brings to his subject is to be equated with that which the theologian brings to the kerygma. Thus Bultmann has rendered Biblical hermeneutics a service in emphasizing what is often denied, obscured or ignored; namely, that there are many similarities between general and Biblical hermeneutics. However, as we have shown, we must be more explicit than Bultmann about the differences between these two hermeneutics.

3. The eternal contemporaneity of the Word of God.

Having examined Bultmann's understanding of Biblical hermeneutics, let us now turn and see how this affects his understanding of the kerygma, its reception by man, and its expression in the life of the Church. This will be a fuller and more particular exploration of those hermeneutical principles which we have already discussed.

In our foregoing discussion, and especially in our examination of the role of "pre-understanding" in Bultmann, it has been clearly implied that the Word of God is truly received only when the Word is recreated or relived by the hearer. In the following

passage Bultmann explicitly states that this is his understanding of how all historical knowledge is received.

> Interpretation lacks understanding if it investigates the text in accordance with dogmatic propositions considered as the result of scientific research, and if in consequence it takes the text in question as the "source" of a particular stage in the history of philosophy, and thus sees this history as an event which lies in the past, instead of revitalizing it for the present. (1)

Bultmann then goes on to develop this in a passage reminiscent of our earlier discussion of Vico, Collingwood and especially Croce.

> Real understanding would, therefore, be paying heed to the question posed in the work which is to be interpreted, to the claim which confronts one in the work, and the 'fulfillment' of one's own individuality would consist in the richer and deeper opening up of one's own possibilities——in being called forth out of one's self (that is, out of one's incomplete, inert self which is always falling into the danger of persistent devotion to the status quo) by the work.(2)

The interpreter enters into a living relationship with the event recorded or proclaimed, and in so doing there takes place a realization of one's own possibilities. Note that this is not a quasi-biological concept of the unfolding of innate human potentialities; rather it takes place only when the event (outside and independent of the hearer) is "re-enacted" by the historian. How does this apply to the reception of the Word of

(1) Essays Philosophical and Theological, p.246.Italics mine.
(2) ibid., p.251. Italics Bultmann's.

God? Concerning this, Bultmann writes:

> Is not faith simply the hearing of Scripture as the Word of God? That is indeed so, but only when Scripture is understood neither as a compendium of doctrines nor as document enshrining the beliefs of other people, yet inspiring enough to evoke religious experience in us. It is so only when Scripture is heard as a word addressed personally to ourselves, as kerygma——i.e. when the experience consists in encounter and response to the address. That Scripture is the Word of God is something which happens only in the here and now of encounter; it is not a fact susceptible to objective proof. (1)

The experience of receiving the Word of God consists in encounter and response (obedience). One cannot encounter a doctrine, fact, chronicle or anything else from the realm of subject and object, I and It, as long as it remains in that realm. Nor can one respond in obedience to such <u>things</u>. I can only encounter and respond in obedience to that which is living for me here and now. Certainly this is writ large throughout the Old and New Testament; The Word of God is eternally contemporary.

> But if it is true that the proclamation of the salvation-occurrence is not a preparatory [subject-object] instruction which precedes the actual demand for faith, but is in itself, the call for faith or the challenge to give up one's previous self-understanding or the cry, "Be reconciled to God!"——if that is so, then that means that <u>the salvation-occurrence is nowhere present except in the proclaiming, accosting, demanding, and promising word of preaching</u>. A merely "reminiscent" historical account referring to what happened in the past cannot make the salvation-occurrence visible.... The salvation-occurrence is eschatological occurrence just in this fact, that it does not become a fact of

(1) <u>Kerygma and Myth</u>, p.201.

> the past but constantly takes place anew in the present. (1) (2)

And elsewhere he writes:

> Thus the cross and passion are ever-present realities. How little they are confined to the events of the first Good Friday is amply illustrated by the words which a disciple of St. Paul puts into his master's mouth: "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the Church" (Col. 1. 24).
>
> In its redemptive aspect the cross of Christ is no mere mythical event, but a permanent historical fact originating in the past historical event which is the crucifixion of Jesus. (3)

The Bible is the record of the activity of the Word of God, both as Son and as Holy Spirit, in the hearts and lives of God's people. But it is not itself the Word of God. The Word of God cannot become fossilized in a book, not even the Bible. The Word of God can only appear in the hearts and lives of His people. The Bible is the principal (but not only) and traditionally accepted (canonized) instrument whereby the Word of God appears in His people. "And causing this to happen is exactly what constitutes the activity of the Spirit."

> ...the Revelation brought by Jesus is neither a sum of doctrines nor a terminated occurrence but

(1) Theology of the New Testament, I, pp.301-302. Italics Bultmann's.

(2) "Preaching", here and throughout Bultmann, often seems to imply an undue emphasis on what takes place from the pulpit on Sunday morning, although he would deny that "preaching" is exclusively this activity. For our purposes "preaching" also includes worship, the sacraments and the total life of the Church.

(3) Kerygma and Myth, p.37.

> that it is what it is only by constantly occurring anew. And causing this to happen is exactly what constitutes the activity of the Spirit. As a matter of fact, Jesus brought no "doctrine" capable of being summarized in propositions; his word, we have seen, is he himself. But what he is, what his coming and his going mean, what it means to be encountered by him——namely: the "sifting" (krisis) of the world which is the judgement of it——all this one must know with every greater clarity, and must acheive this knowledge anew in every Now. The Spirit's "testimony" which "calls to mind" Jesus' words consist in the fact that Jesus' word is constantly being understood anew while it remains the same——indeed, it remains the same because of the very fact that it is constantly new. This is the way in which the Spirit "glorifies" Jesus (John 16:14). (1)

This then is how Bultmann conceives the Word of God as being received: The Word of God is proclaimed, the hearer relives or "re-enacts" the event being proclaimed, and his response to it is a decision of faith (obedience). Each of these three steps (of which the last two cannot be separated in actual experience) take place through the operation of the Holy Spirit.

This is an appropriate place to mention a major criticism leveled against Bultmann's by his most careful and just critics, e.g., Father L. Malevez and Gustaf Wingren. This criticism has to do with the status which Bultmann gives to the historical events upon which the kerygma is founded. Their contention is that the historical reality of these events is not adequately affirmed in Bultmann; or that it is not affirmed in the right way.

(1) Theology of the New Testament, II, p.89.

> Unless the gospel speaks of something that has happened, it is not possible to retain the gospel's sentence of justification which makes the forgiveness of sins a gift rather than something which the hearer accomplishes by his own decisions. When the concrete events is lost, the conception of a gift in the word is also lost. (1)

First let it be said that a general subjective interpretation of Bultmann's theology will not stand. This should be evident from our foregoing discussion. The fact that such an interpretation is not legitimate is argued by Father Malevez (who certainly does not come to Bultmann with pre-established sympathies for him) in The Christian Message and Myth.(2) It would be superfluous to repeat that argument here.

However, beyond this general subjective interpretation which is not tenable, there remains the question of the status of Biblical events. That is to say, the events are affirmed, but are they affirmed in the right way? Malevez writes:

> Thus the historic Christ remains, in Bultmann's view, the place of, and the decisive moment for, our encounter with God. (3)

There are passages throughout Bultmann which say just this. But this is not sufficient to establish that Bultmann's understanding of the historic Christ is adequate. Malevez feels that in

(1) Wingren, Gustaf, Theology in Conflict, Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh 1958, p.139.

(2) Malevez, L., The Christian Message and Myth, SCM Press, London, 1958. See esp. pp. 111ff.

(3) ibid., p.117. (4) e.g., Kerygma and Myth, p.207.

Bultmann's thought Christ is "we do not know why, the human organ of the Word of God; that is all; his Person lacks mystery, and has no peculiar relation to the God who sends him..."(1) Much could be said of this criticism. It is certainly an arguable point of view, for these matters are not developed in Bultmann. On the other hand it is more difficult to see just what Malevez wants. For Bultmann, Jesus the Christ is he who brings to us the Word of God. In this is implied the greatest possible mystery, although admittedly it is not dwelt upon. His peculiar relationship to God is that it is Christ alone who brings to us the Word of God. This certainly is the essential characteristic of his "peculiar relation to the God who sends him", although once again this is not dwelt upon. The question which remains in one's mind is whether or not what Malevez wants is a development of this mystery and peculiar relationship in terms of prophecy, miracle and subject-object discussions of the relation of the three persons in the Godhead. A discussion of these matters, at least in the traditional forms, is largely cut off to Bultmann by his very presuppositions. Therefore one's estimate of Bultmann will vary according to the value which one places upon the traditional formulations of these matters.

Still taking Malevez and Wingrin as representative of the best criticism of Bultmann, they both bring their criticism to

(1) Malevez, op.cit., p.117.

a head in their remarks about Bultmann's treatment of the Resurrection. Malevez complains that in Bultmann Christ's "Resurrection or his survival are not important for our salvation."(1) This is probably Bultmann's most vulnerable point. A great deal more work will have to be done on his understanding of the Resurrection, and his work supplemented in this area. Yet it is to Bultmann's credit that he has opened up discussion about the Resurrection in a radical way. If we are to really turn our backs on any notion of a resusitated corpse, and if we are to do justice to the strange and varied accounts of the Resurrection to be found in the New Testament; if we are to do this, then certainly something more has to be said than is being said in most contemporary theology. Certainly devotional language and subject-object formulations do not offer the only alternatives here. Bultmann may be pointing the way to an alternative; although few, least of all Bultmann himself, would be inclined to look upon this effort as a "final answer".

4. Historical knowledge as the only access to the knowledge of God.

We turn now to an examination of some implications of what we have said about Bultmann's interpretation of the nature of historical event. Bultmann asks: What is the purpose of historical study? His answer follows naturally out of what we have already said about him. It is:

(1) Malevez, op.cit., p.117 Cf. Wingrin, op.cit., p.139. Cf. also Niebuhr, R.R., Resurrection and Historical Reason, pp. 60ff.

> ...the ultimate purpose in the study of history is to realize consciously the possibilities it affords for the understanding of human existence. (1)

Applied to Scripture this means that in the study of Scripture I learn of possibilities for human existence; but, more, I also "hear things [possibilities] about my own existence which vitally concern me"(2); things of eternal consequence. That is to say, the study of Scripture opens to me possibilities which are similar, yet different, from those which open to me, say, in the study of the life of Goethe. This similarity and difference is the same similarity and difference we discovered in our discussion of the similarities and differences in general and Biblical hermeneutics, i.e., only the Biblical events have a transcendent reference which open to me "possibilities" of eternal consequence. Yet, in spite of these differences, it is still true that all human "possibilities" are opened to me only through the appropriately conducted study of historical event, i.e., all knowledge depends upon experience.

> ...all knowledge depends on experience. For if experience changes in the course of time, then knowledge is a daughter of time. That means that knowledge of truth has historical character, it depends on the situation in time. (3)

(1) Kerygma and Myth, p. 192.

(2) Ibid., p. 192. Italics mine.

(3) History and Eschatology, p. 9. This statement arises in conjunction with a discussion of Bacon and Locke, but it is an integral part of Bultmann's thinking.

Another way of expressing this is to say that all knowledge is arrived at by the historical method; and the historical method concerns itself with the events which make up the life of men, with "the actual living of men, which is true history".(1) And it is through this historical method that we are enabled to take possession of and to make our own the possibilities which men have achieved in the past, as well as realizing new human possibilities appropriate to our own situation in time. Man is "being on the way".

This applies not only to individual men, but also to human groups; and among human groups it applies especially to the Church with its continuous and self-conscious historical existence. The Church also realizes its existence (realizes that it has an existence coming out of the past, and realizes new forms for its existence in the present) as it "re-enacts" the Christ event in ever changing historical circumstances. The Church too is "being on the way".(2)

So it is that man realizes who he is in the course of his individual history. This involves appropriating to himself the experiences (the already realized historical possibilities) of mankind by means of the historical process of recreating those possibilities in the present. Among these historical possibilities are those recorded in Scripture which tell of God's dealing with man.

(1) Theology of the New Testament, I, p.305.
(2) Cf. Kerygma and Myth, p.43.

These too may be appropriated by "re-enacting" them in the present. (The way in which this is done is, as we have described, both similar to and different from the way in which general historical possibilities are appropriated.) For the Christian the context in which this takes place is the Church; a historically founded and developing body, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and itself a part of God's dealing with man.

From this it follows that the only access we have to God is historical, i.e., through what God has done and continues to do in history. This includes what God has done in non-Biblical history in order to lead man into a search for, and a "not purely negative" understanding of, Himself; it includes the events of Scripture which are proclaimed to men today; and it includes the "re-enactment" of these events (by means of preaching, by means of the sacraments) within the Spirit-indwelt Church. It is on the basis of this understanding that Bultmann can say that "we cannot say what God is like in himself, but only what he does to us."(1) For us God is what he does; supremely what he does in Christ.

If this is understood we can then understand the validity of Bultmann's position when he says: "I am interpreting theological affirmations as assertions about human life."(2) This is not to be perversely understood as meaning that transcendent

(1) Kerygma and Myth, p.202.
(2) ibid., p.107.

reference is thereby excluded; but rather as God working in and through human life. For how else can we make affirmations about God. All we know of God——or, if it is preferred, all that God has made known of Himself——is what has been humanly (historically) perceived and humanly (historically) formulated. We know God by what he does to us and for us in history, and supremely in Jesus Christ. What other possibility exists?

If theological affirmations are assertions about human life, then it is consistent for Bultmann to say that "The only true interpretation of eschatology is one which makes it a real experience of human life."(1) This "real experience of human life" includes first of all the historical event of Jesus as the Christ. It also includes every instance in which in the context of an individual's historical existence the event of the Christ is recreated in faith and brought up into the present. This too is a "real experience of human life".

Bultmann would seemingly exclude any future and final eschatological event. To this we would only add that such an event is thought of as being potentially a "real experience of human life"; a fact which is testified to in that it is conceived of in terms of the perfection and completion of the historically delivered and historically realized experience of the new life in Christ which we now possess. But be that as it may, Bultmann's eschatology has made the following important contributions to contemporary Christian theology. First, it has

(1) Kerygma and Myth, p. 106.

forcefully presented and made us aware of the "realized" aspect of eschatology; an aspect to which no one will take exception as long as it does not lay claim to exclusiveness. Secondly, Bultmann has forced those who adhere to a more traditional eschatology to be aware of the difficulties of their position; and particularly to be more aware of the difficulties in theological language. Thirdly, Bultmann's understanding of eschatology is a good corrective for eschatologically motivated "philosophies of history" which have marked and often marred the history of the Church.

It is in this same vein that Bultmann equates "cosmic dimension" or significance with "historic dimension" or significance.(1) What does he mean by this? He means that that which is spoken of as cosmically significant (e.g., the pre-existence of Christ) is known or received historically, and that its implications can only be understood historically. For example, the pre-existence of Christ is an affirmation which is made only upon the basis of our having historically received (responded to) Jesus as the Christ. Moreover, the significance which we derive from this affirmation can be described not only as "cosmic" but also as "historical". For what is the use to which the affirmation is put? It affirms that all through the course of history it was God's intention to send his Son to man;

(1) Theology of the New Testament, I, p. 305.

and that God's preparation for this event can be seen in history. Thus the affirmation reveals to the believer aspects of historical events which were not at the time evident, e.g., the giving of the Law as being a preparation for the Christ.

But beyond this, we say in this affirmation of the pre-existence of the Christ that before the creation of the world the Christ existed with the Father. Now when we say this we are saying something "logically strange"——mythological, if you will. Its real significance or content is historical; for when we extend the existence of the Christ into pre-creation we are really decribing a quality or aspect of the existence of the Christ in the historical process. In short, everything we say in this area is strictly a projection from the historical basis.

5. Historian and theologian: similarity and difference.

The above section concludes our exposition of Bultmann's work insofar as it deals with the place of history in the study of theology. Before going on to see to what extent Bultmann delivers a valid corrective to the Christian attitude toward history, let us first see what are the similarities and differences between his position and that of Vico, Croce and Collingwood. Such a comparison has been implicit in much of what we have already said, and we have made brief specific comparisons in passing. However it will be helpful to summarize in an explicit and comprehensive way the similarities and differences between these writers before proceeding.

Bultmann himself gives an estimate of his work in relation to Croce and Collingwood.

> Collingwood as well as Croce is aware of the historicity of the human being, and, like Croce, he avoids the consequence of relativism and nihilism. For every <u>now</u>, every moment, in its historical relatedness of course, has within itself a full meaning. The past from which every present springs is not a determining past, but a past offering to the present the problems which demand solution or development. In knowing his situation the individual knows himself. Therefore the present is meaningful for the individual. Of course, to ask for meaning in history is not allowable if one is asking for meaning in the sense of goal. The meaning of history is immanent in history, because history is the history of mind. And therefore it may be said, as we said of Croce, that for Collingwood every present moment is an eschatological moment, and that history and eschatology are identified. (1)

There is nothing in this statement from which we would wish to demur. It applies in large part to Vico also. The phrase "history and eschatology are identified" is, of course, Bultmann's own. However it does not do violence to the sense of Croce is and Collingwood's thought in this area. In neither is there any looking forward to a meaning or fulfillment which is to take place in the future. The meaning of history is embodied in the concrete historical event as that is created or recreated. One could say that they have a secularized form of realized eschatology. But it is secularized; it is based on general hermeneutics; it does not and cannot recognize the Biblical hermeneutics; it does not and cannot recognize the Biblical hermeneutics which

(1) <u>History and Eschatology</u>, pp. 135-136. Italics Bultmann's.

are proper to Bultmann's procedure, i.e., as we have discussed, the hermeneutics which recognizes the transcendent reference of eternal significance which certain Biblical events have.

There are other points of similarity with Vico and Croce and Collingwood. Because of the extended discussion which we have given to them, it will suffice to make a brief summary of each.

First, there is the conviction that the meaning of events cannot be known on a strict subject-object basis, but only by the historian or theologian entering into the event and discovering its "eternal contemporaneity". There are neither objective historical events with a meaning apart from the historian which can be "pigeon holed" to produce history; nor are there historically ascertainable miracles which can be used to bolster up our faith.

Secondly, there is the belief that knowledge can only be attained historically. In the case of the historian this is attained by the use of general hermeneutics; and in the case of the theologian through the use of Biblical hermeneutics.

Thirdly, there is the understanding that man comes to discover his possibilities through the encounter with historical event. This similarity, although present between Bultmann and all three of the historians studied, is most marked between Bultmann and Croce.

Lastly, and this is the main burden of the discussion at the beginning of this section, there is the conviction that the meaning of events is to be found in the events and not in the future, i.e., the meaning of history is realized now; or, any "transcendent" meaning in history is immanent in historical events.

As to the difference between Bultmann and the historians, there is only one; but that difference is a very important one. The historian in his use of general hermeneutics has no place for any transcendent reference of eternal significance. This is a peculiarity of Biblical hermeneutics.

Concerning these matters in which there is agreement between Bultmann and Vico, Croce and Collingwood the Christian should have no cause to object. However, as to the meaning of history being found in the present as opposed to the future, we would only want to make this qualifying statement: This does not necessarily exclude a "final consumation" of meaning in the future. To make this qualification does not alter the validity of anything that Bultmann has said in this matter; just, as we stated earlier, to broaden his conception of preaching does not detract from anything he has said about that activity. There is, in both cases, at the most, a task of stating what has been left unsaid; but not of retracting anything that has been said.

6. Bultmann's Corrective to the Christian Attitude to History: The immanence of transcendence.

In this, and in the concluding section of this chapter on Bultmann, we want to call attention to the way in which Bultmann's work can clarify Christian thought about history and the place of history in theology. This will be largely a development of ideas which have been implied or stated in the foregoing discussion.

What we have said so far indicates that Bultmann has devoted much thought to the nature of history and its place in theology. His treatment of it is both self-conscious and subtle. Yet there are many passages in Bultmann which, taken in isolation, would seem to indicate that he had no interest in history. These passages have been a persistent source of misunderstanding for contemporary theology.(1) For example:

> It would be wrong at this point to raise again the problem of how this preaching [of the Cross of Christ] arose historically, as though that could vindicate its truth. That would be to tie our faith in the word of God to the results of historical research. (2)

On the face of it this passage seems to indicate an indifference to whether or not the Crucifixion ever took place or not. A

(1) For a recent example of this see: Roberts, T.A., History and Christian Apologetic, S.P.C.K., London, 1960, p.160.

(2) Kerygma and Myth, p.41. Italics mine.

critic who wished to do so could use this and similar statements to demonstrate that Bultmann is not interested in the historically based kerygma, but only in "timeless truths" existentially apprehended. This interpretation is often placed upon such passages. And yet this is the same man whose great concern for the proper interpretation of history we have already discussed.

However, a second reading and a little thought is sufficient to reconcile this seeming contradiction. It is of course not the case that Bultmann is indifferent to history; all we have said up to now, his The Theology of the New Testament, and indeed his very programme of demythologization, all indicate that this is not the case. The explanation lies in the phrase which we have emphasized above: "...as though that could vindicate its truth." The historian can, theoretically at least, vindicate the truth of the statement that Jesus of Nazareth was crucified at a certain place at a certain time, and for a particular reason. But the "truth" of the Crucifixion for the Christian includes more than just that event. It also includes a transcendent reference, i.e., in the Crucifixion of Jesus the Christ God acted for me and for all mankind. Now, as we have seen, it is just this matter of transcendent reference which has no place, at least explicitly, in the work of the historian as he proceeds according to the principles of general hermeneutics. Therefore it is impossible that the historian could ever vindicate the truth

(or falsity) of the Christian understanding of the Crucifixion. So, it is not that Bultmann is disinterested in the historical basis of the kerygma; on the contrary, his interest in this basis had led him to see the true status of the historical basis. It just happened that that status is not what it has often been thought to be.

When this same understanding of the place of history in theology is applied to miracles the consequences of this point of view become clearer and less acceptable to those committed to the traditional formulation of this aspect of the Christian faith. Bultmann writes:

> Mythological thought regards the divine activity, whether in nature or in history, as an interference with the course of nature, history, or the life of the soul, a tearing of it asunder——a miracle, in fact. Thus it objectifies the divine activity and projects it on to the plane of worldly happenings. A miracle——i.e., an act of God——is not visible or ascertainable like worldly events...but something accomplished in them in such a way that the closed weft of history as it presents itself to objective observation is left undisturbed. To every other eye than the eye of faith the action of God is hidden. Only the "natural" happening is generally visible and ascertainable. In it is accomplished the hidden act of God. (1)

It will be seen that this understanding of miracle is the same as that of the Crucifixion which we have already discussed; just as the transcendent reference of the Crucifixion cannot be historically verified, so too is the transcendent reference of the miracles historically unverifiable.

(1) Kerygma and Myth, p. 197. Italics Bultmann's. Cf. pp. 208 - 209.

What is involved here? It is not fundamentally a case of mythological vs. demythologized thinking; much less are the battle lines to be drawn somewhere in the difficult realm of the interpretation of miracle. Many critics have pointed out that Bultmann has his own mythology; that he has "re-mythologized" the kerygma. Bultmann concedes that this may be so; only maintaining that he has succeeded in removing myth "in the traditional sense...the kind of mythology which has become antiquated with the decay of the mythical world view."(1)(2) But this focus of attention should not be the primary one in this controversy.

The primary focus should be, and Bultmann wishes it to be, upon the interpretation of history which we use in our study of the Bible. As we had occasion to mention in our discussion of the motivation of Bultmann's work, he challenges the validity of a strict subject-object framework for historical thinking; if you will, he challenges the subject-object mythology. In simpler terms, he denies that there are historically ascertainable events (e.g., miracles) which exist apart from faith and yet which can be used to support that faith. It is in this sense that "we cannot tie our faith in the word of God to the results of historical research." Bultmann points out that the mytholo-

(1) Kerygma and Myth, p.43.

(2) This is not to be taken as implying that we consider Bultmann's treatment of myth as adequate. However, its deficiencies (primarily the lack of depth of understanding) do not invalidate that which he does have to say.

gical language itself should warn us that the events are not to be understood, in their fundamental import, in terms of a subject-object world view. He comments on this:

> Rather, the fact that the New Testament describes the figure and work of Christ in mythological terms is enough to show that if they are the act of redemption they must not be understood [simply] in their context of world history. The paradox is just this, that a human figure, Jesus of Nazareth (see esp. John 6, 42), and the destiny of that figure——i.e. a human being and his fate, with a recognizable place in world history, and therefore exposed to the objective observation of the historian and intelligible within their context in world history——are not thus apprehended and understood as what they really are, namely, as the act of God, as <u>the</u> eschatological event. (1)

The way in which Bultmann would have us relate our knowledge of an event and our faith (belief) in that event is indicated in the following discussion of faith as understood in St. John's Gospel.

> But believing in the full sense and knowing are not two different acts or stages——this is quite clear from the fact that the order can be reversed as in [John] 17:8 and also in 16:30 and I Jn. 4:16: "And we have come to know and to believe the love which God has for us".
>
> Faith and knowledge, we conclude, cannot be distinguished as two stages. In the Christian Church there are not two classes of people, as there were among the Gnostics, who distinguished between "<u>pistics</u>" (men of faith) and "<u>gnostics</u>" (men of knowledge). Faith is not the acceptance of a dogma upon which there follows a disclosure of items of esoteric knowledge or a mystic vision. No, faith is everything. Knowledge cannot cut loose from faith and soar on out beyond it; faith, however, also contains knowledge——faith itself knows. Since for John all knowing can only be a knowing-in-faith, faith comes to itself, so to say, in knowing. Knowing is a structural aspect of believing. (2)

(1) <u>Kerygma and Myth</u>, p.208. Italics Bultmann's.
(2) <u>Theology of the New Testament</u>, II, p.74.

This is clearly not cast in the subject-object terms of a historically verifiable event which comes first, and which we then as subject give our assent to in faith. Rather it is that knowledge of an event as an act of God, and faith in that same event, arise together.

Event and interpretation arise together: the immanence of transcendence. The problem we have been discussing is that of the relation of knowledge (of an event) and faith (in an event). We have maintained that they cannot be distinguished as two stages. Another way of stating it is to say that the problem is that of the relation between the action of God (supremely the Christ event) in its aspect, on the one hand, ~~of~~ as empirical historical occurrence; and, on the other hand, of the Church's apprehension of ~~these~~ such events as saving events. This theological problem is strictly parallel (but not identical) with the historical problem which we followed in Vico, Croce and Collingwood; namely, the relation of event and interpretation.

Throughout Part II of this thesis we saw that history is impossible on the basis of the Cartesian dualism between "objective event" ("brute fact") and historical interpretation. This approach is suitable for chronicle; a form of "non-history" which often finds its "non-theological" parallel in the form of historical resumés of doctrine, i.e., both are compendiums which base their authority upon the authority of the authorities. This same dualism is suitable as a basis for the important

inquiries of philology; another form of "non-history" which finds its "non-theological" parallel in some (but certainly not all) Biblical word studies. This same dualism is also the basis for the "philosophy of history" in which external interpretations are placed upon historical events. This finds its most obvious "non-theological" parallel in Fundamentalism where a patently post-Rationalistic point of view is imposed upon the Biblical events. It also finds a subtler (but not essentially different) parallel in all theology which imposes a subject-object world-view upon Biblical events.(1) Neither genuine history nor genuine theology is possible upon the basis of a strict subject-object dualism. Rather, history and theology are both only possible when the subject (historian, theologian) participates in (recreates, "re-enacts") the object of his study (Caesar's invasion of Britian, the Christ event), fitting that event into an organized whole of experience both past and contemporary. This organized realm of experience in the case of Caesar's invasion is (as we discussed earlier) made up of the historian's historical experience of geographical, political, military and other matters. The organized realm of experience in the case of the Christ event is made up of the theologian's historical experience of God's dealing with his people in both the past and in the present; dealings which also have a place and explanation in secular terms.

(1) For a fuller statement of these "non-theological" parallels of "non-history" see Part IV, infra.

In our study of Vico, Croce and Collingwood we saw that the unity of event and interpretation is an aspect of the unity of history (the certum) and philosophy (the verum). This understanding, which we first took up in our study of Vico, and which we examined in our treatment of Croce and Collingwood, made it clear that both history and philosophy "fail by half" in not availing themselves of the other. In this unity philosophy was conceived, let us repeat, as a critical-historical method and not as a metaphysic. History must be approached with the help of philosophy; philosophy must not separate itself from history (i.e., what man has done).

The parallel to this in theology is that the study of Biblical event (exegesis) must be informed by philosophy, i.e., by a critical-historical method. This necessary unity of exegesis and philosophy (i.e., a critical-historical method) is to be seen in any example of exegesis, even in those which emphatically disavow any such unity, e.g., Fundamentalism. Now, since the critical-historical discipline which is brought to bear on the study of Biblical event is called Biblical theology, or just theology, we can rephrase this and say: Exegesis must be informed by theology. And as in history, the opposite must also be said: Theology (the verum) must be informed and checked by exegesis (the study of the certum). Both "fail by half" in not availing themselves of the other. This is the presupposition

of all competent exegesis and theology. In this we see a further way in which Biblical hermeneutics are a part of general hermeneutics.

The way in which this understanding (where knowledge and faith, or event and interpretation, arise together) differs from that of both traditional mythology and scientific thought is as follows.

> In faith the closed weft presented or produced by objective observation is transcended, though not as in mythological thought. For mythology imagines it to be torn asunder, whereas faith transcends it as a whole when it speaks of the activity of God. In the last resort it is already transcended when I speak of myself, for I myself, my real self, am no more visible or ascertainable than an act of God. When worldly happenings are viewed as a closed series, as not only scientific understanding but even workaday life requires, there is certainly no room for any act of God. But this is just the paradox of faith: it understands an ascertainable event in its context in nature and history as the act of God. Faith cannot dispense with its "nevertheless". (1)

Commenting on this Gogarten says:

> It is not difficult to see that [the] placing of the Word in the central position as regards the revelation does not in any way exclude the deed of God, but we must look more closely if we are to recognize that the relation of the Word and the deed in the revelation is not such that the deed comes first and is followed as a kind of directive or commentary by the Word. Nor, of course, is the opposite the case: first the Word and then the deed. On the contrary, what is peculiar to the way in which the divine revelation comes to us is that the deed takes place through the Word and in the Word. (2)

(1) Kerygma and Myth, pp. 198-199.

(2) Gogarten, op.cit., p. 83.

Transcendence and Immanence preserved. This understanding preserves both the transcendence and immanence of God. The transcendence is preserved in that it is God himself who, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, speaks to me and acts for me both in the original revelatory event (then), and in the Word which in my contemporary experience I encounter in faith (now). But, as we have discussed before, "then" and "now", "before" and "after", are terms applicable to chronicle rather than to history. It is not that the terms "then" and "now" have no meaning; they do of course. It is just that these terms are not of great significance for history. The "then" becomes "now" when it is historically perceived. This was one of the recurring contentions of our study of Vico, Croce and Collingwood. Similarly the "then" of the kerygma becomes "now" in the proclamation of the Word. In this way all Christians are, like Paul, "one born out of due time" (I Cor. 15:8). The "then" of the Resurrection is seen in faith to be a part of my experience "now". In this we see that the process by which the Word is proclaimed and received has significant similarities with the historical process.

Concerning the traditional view of a transcendent God breaking the cause and effect structure of the world, and to which the view we are maintaining is opposed, we must ask: Supposing it were possible, in what way does an historically ascertainable and objective revelation reality breaking the chain of cause and effect insure or heighten the transcendence of God? Surely

it testifies to that transcendence only if we have previously decided that this is the (only?) way in which God's transcendence can be manifested. This point of view also testifies to the "..." Babylonian captivity" imposed [on theology] by a scientific concept [of subject and object] which is essentially alien to theology."(1)

Yet not only is the transcendence of God maintained in Bultmann's understanding of revelation, but also God's immanence. The immanence of God is maintained both in the original revelatory event, which is understood to be an event in and through which God acts; and also in my present situation in which, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, I encounter God in the Word of God (Scripture, preaching, sacraments, fellowship) proclaimed through the Church. In both the original situation and now I encounter the transcendence of God as it finds expression in his immanence. God's transcendence is immanent; each holds its proper place and neither is subjected to the other. It is in this way that God has provided for His world. "The transcendence of God is not as in myth reduced to immanence. Instead, we have the paradox of a transcendent God present and active in history; 'The Word became flesh'."(2)

(1) Gogarten, op.cit., p.85.

(2) Kerygma and Myth, p.44 Cf. The Theology of the New Testament, II, p.77; also the commentary by Schumann in Kerygma and Myth, p. 185.

7. Bultmann's Corrective to the Christian Attitude to History: the meaning of history.

A problem which has always been asked in Christian theology is: What is the meaning of history? In contemporary theological writing this problem is sometimes avoided because it is consciously or unconsciously regarded as hopeless; or it is answered rather uncritically by a conservative reworking of such categories as that of Providence. Either of these solutions leave much to be desired.

Bultmann states the origin of this problem.

> ...the question of meaning in history was raised and answered for the first time within an outlook which believed it knew the end of history. This occurred in the Jewish-Christian understanding of history which was dependent eschatology. The Greeks did not raise the question of meaning in history and ancient philosophers had not developed a philosophy of history. A philosophy of history grew up for the first time in Christian thinking, for Christians believed they knew the end of the world and of history. (1)

But now, continues Bultmann, the situation has changed; for "the question of meaning in history has become meaningless."(2)

That this estimate of the situation is correct is abundantly clear from our examination of Vico, Croce and Collingwood. In that examination we saw the futility of trying to predict the "end of history", or to descry patterns in history of any but

(1) History and Eschatology, p. 120.

(2) ibid., p. 120.

the most general sort. There is no contradiction between this view and the belief of the Christian that Christ is the alpha and omega of history, for to say that Christ is the alpha and omega of history is only to point to a quality of history and the end of history. It is not a basis for giving a specific description of the pattern or course of empirical historical events, nor for giving a timetable of historical developments, nor for giving the content of history or the end of history.

If this is the situation, are we then reduced to agnosticism or nihilism here. No, for:

> ...there still remains the question of the meaning of single historical phenomena and single historical epochs. To speak more exactly: there remains the question of the importance of single historical events and deeds of our past for our present, a present which is charged with responsibility for our future. (1)

This is entirely consistent with our discussion in Part II of this thesis. We saw the "universal history" and the "philosophy of history" are invalid; and we set forth in various ways the theme that the only source of value in history is to be found in the historic forms (specific events) which Spirit has developed in the course of history. Does this mean, then, that the transcendent is excluded from history, and that henceforth we can only deal with the limited and secular meaning inherent in specific historic events? No. The only transcendence excluded is a false

(1) History and Eschatology, p. 121.

transcendence which imposes a pattern on history, which predetermines the meaning of specific events, and which gives the content of the future and the end of history.

Where then is the transcendent (the divine) to be found? It is to be found in God's immanence in history. God's transcendence is immanent. It is discovered in the search for and the "pre-understanding" of God by man. It is discovered and only discovered in what God does for us in history, and supremely in what he does for us in Jesus Christ. Our theological assertions about the Christ are assertions about history; they are assertions about the immanence of the transcendence in history. "But this is just the paradox of faith: it understands an ascertainable event in its context in nature and history as the act of God."(1)

The immanence of God's transcendence runs throughout Bultmann. The Church is the eschatological community; the transcendent community in an historical embodiment. Worship "is the appropriate [historical] form for representing the eschatological transcendence of the Church..."(2) Proclamation is the historically grounded (i.e., immanent) form in which God's transcendence is set forth and realized. The "...demand perceived [in specific historic situations] by conscience has its foundation in a sphere transcendent to man..."(3) To affirm that es-

(1) Kerygma and Myth, p. 199.
(2) Theology of the New Testament, I, p. 152. Cf. p. 310.
(3) ibid., p. 218.

chatological events are realized in the present is to affirm that the transcendent is immanent in history and in the living of man.

The meaning of history can only be known when the end of history is known. Croce and Collingwood say that the only "end" or meaning in history which can be affirmed is that of specific historic events. Bultmann would agree, but he would add that certain historical events (most clearly, the Incarnation and the proclamation of the Incarnation) have a transcendent reference; and in these events, seen together with the transcendent reference to which they point, the "end" has appeared in history. This "end" is not one which can be discussed in terms of "before and after", "then and now"; nor is it located in some elusive "future".

Rather, this transcendent "end" is immanent within these specific historic events; the "end" has been and is presently realized. Because this is so we may affirm the meaning of these events, and of all of the manifold events which in one way or another and to one degree or another participate in the Incarnation; and we may do this, without imposing a false transcendence upon history.

> But now we can say: the meaning in history lies always in the present, and when the present is conceived as the eschatological present by Christian faith the meaning in history is realized. (1)

(1) History and Eschatology, p. 155. Italics Bultmann's.

Chapter VII

PAUL TILLICH: HISTORY AND HERMENEUTICS.

1. The Problem of History Raised by the Reality of Faith.

All of the men whom we have examined have been concerned with a common problem, namely: What is the relationship between, on the one hand, the empirical study of historical events and the value which emerges from this study; and, on the other hand, the values which, although they do not arise directly out of empirical historical study, many people have claimed to be able to discern <u>in</u> historical events? These men have pointed to this problem in various ways. In Vico it is expressed in terms of a rational and civil history on the one hand, and the discernment of the operation of divine providence on the other. Croce protests vigorously and at length that there is only one aspect to experience, and that is the historical. Any idea that historical events have a transcendental reference is emphatically rejected; although it is not easy to see that his own ideas of human liberty and of the "spirit" realizing its potentialities in the historical process escape his own rejection. Collingwood is almost entirely concerned with the problem of how we arrive at historical knowledge, and this involves the rejection of any "philosophy of history" which seeks to impose an external meaning on the historical process. However, although he only treats it very briefly, we have seen that he is aware of the important relationship which exists between religious and historical thought.

With Bultmann we turned to a consideration of this problem which is explicitly Christian and theological. In Bultmann our problem is refocused for us, and in many ways focused more sharply. He asks: What is the nature, on the one hand, of that experience which can appropriately be described in non-mythological language, and to which general hermeneutics are applicable; and, on the other hand, that experience which has traditionally been described in mythological language, and to which Biblical hermeneutics are applicable? Moreover, what is the relationship between these two kinds of experience?

Now, we come to the work of Paul Tillich; and here we will discover an important similarity with all of the men whom we have already studied. But we will find much more. We will find an understanding and acceptance of human experience which is more comprehensive than that of any of the other men we have studied. In addition we will discover an expression of the belief that the totality of human experience is, in spite of all of its ambiguity, a radically unified whole. Also included in our examination is Tillich's brilliant and provocative answer to the problem of the "philosophy of history"; a problem which has raised itself in every chapter. This bold and exciting programme is carried through by Tillich in a spirit which is thoughly critical and thoughly dialectical; a fact which is reflected in the following passages setting forth the problem of history raised by the reality of the Christian faith, i.e.,

the problem of the relationship between the straightforward study of empirical historical events and the significance which Christians discern in certain of these same events.(1)

> History...creates difficulties. For the religious view there is in history a super-temporal element, which cannot be reduced to historical terms... (2)

But at the same time the "super-temporal element"

> ...must not be placed alongside of secular history as something which has a separate history. (3)

If the second half of this dilemma is chosen, then we have "...the rationalized, orthodox theory that a sacred history of miraculous sort parallels secular history——a theory which breaks up the unity of historical knowledge."(4) If, on the other hand, we chose the first half of the dilemma, then we have "...the rational, liberal theory that sacred history is nothing but a part of general history——a theory which leaves the self-sufficient finitude of the historical untouched and unbroken."(5)

Speaking of the characteristics of this latter theory, i.e., the rational, liberal theory, Tillich writes:

> There is the possibility of so directing one's mind to single meanings, that the act of faith, although implicitly concurring, is excluded from one's consciousness. That is the profane,

(1) Our statement of Tillich's understanding of history is handicapped by the fact that the section of the Systematic Theology which deals with history has not yet been published.

(2) Tillich, Paul, The Religious Situation, Meridian Books, New York, 1956, p.206.

(3) ibid, p.206.

(4) ibid, p.206.

(5) ibid, p.206.

> unbelieving, worldly attitude...directed toward the single meaning and its fulfillment in the system of meanings [in the] world. (1)

This attitude leads to desperation because history understood in this way is devoid of meaning.

However, if we choose the other half of the dilemma our situation is no better. Discussing this Tillich says:

> [It is] possible, while excluding the single forms of meaning and their relationships [e.g., complete or relative indifference to problems of exegesis or historical research], to direct oneself to the absolute meaning. This is the holy, believing, religious attitude... [in which] the single meaning is only a medium, a symbol, a vessel of the absolute meaning. (2)

To choose this horn of the dilemma also leads to desperation; the desperation of the holy attitude which is "emptiness of form". Many so-called "spiritual" interpretations of Scripture are appallingly marked by this "emptiness of form", as are, to a lesser extent, many typological studies of Scripture. More specifically, in such interpretations the emphasis is largely or entirely devotional, dogmatic and possibly semantic; but there is a suppression of problems connected with the historically conditioned forms of New Testament experience, thought and expression, e.g., those connected with the Ascension. This attitude is not only empty of form, it is also destructive of reason. Discussing this attitude in relation to myth and cult Tillich writes:

(1) Tillich, Paul, The Interpretation of History, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1936, p.224 - 225.

(2) ibid., p. 225.

> ...myth and cult are [in this approach] special realms of reason along with the others... [and] If they are considered to be special rational functions in addition to the others, they are in a never ending and insoluble conflict with the other functions. They are swallowed by them, placed into the category of irrational feeling, or maintained as strange bodies, heteronomous and destructive, within the structure of reason.(1)

A further implication of this attitude which sees a second kind of history, a "holy history", alongside of general history is that:

> If such an interpretation were true, the manifestation of the ground of being [God] would destroy the structure of being; God would be split within himself, as religious dualism has asserted... disclosing a "structure of destruction". (2)

The problem of history posed by the reality of the Christian faith is that it can be and usually is interpreted as presenting the dilemma of choosing between an attitude of self-sufficient finitude devoid of meaning, or of choosing to flee from the ambiguity of historical existence into destructive supernaturalism which sees itself as a realm of knowledge alongside of and in conflict with all other knowledge.

2. The Problem of Hermeneutics.

Having indicated Tillich's understanding of the problem of history raised by the reality of the Christian faith, let us

(1) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1951, p.81.

(2) ibid., p. 116.

now turn to his hermeneutic principles. The term "hermeneutics" is more characteristic of Bultmann than Tillich. However we will use the term in this chapter in the interests of consistency with our earlier discussion of Bultmann, and because it points to the central task of both historian and theologian: the interpretation of documents. Under this inclusive term "hermeneutics" we wish to include the following five aspects of Tillich's theology: a. "Pre-understanding", and its closely associated ideas of the "method of correlation" and the "theological circle"; b. Tillich's understanding of the place of subject and object in theological inquiry; c. his distinction between preliminary and ultimate concern; d. his ideas about the approach to historical events which we have been referring to as "re-enactment"; and finally e. his understanding of the relationship between knowledge and historical event. An examination of these five areas will give us what are in effect Tillich's hermeneutical principles; although he does not explicitly refer to them as such. In looking at these areas we will enter into a substantial portion of Tillich's theology; and the fact that this takes place in what is only an examination of his hermeneutic principles testifies both to the importance of those principles, and to Tillich's recognition of their importance. (It is, of course, not our purpose to attempt the formidable task of giving even a resumé of the whole theological system of which this

examination covers only a part.) This section will be a relatively general approach to Tillich's hermeneutical principles, and much of what we will have to say will be seen to be applicable to the historian's use of his documents. Then, on the basis of this examination, we will go on in the succeeding section to examine the hermeneutical principles which Tillich uses in his approach to such distinctively religious phenomena as ecstasy and miracle.

a. "Pre-understanding".

Speaking of historical events in general, Tillich says that "the new is not entirely new; it remains related to the old, by which it has been produced...as the product to the producer. This is the basis for historical tradition."(1) This statement is meant to describe only one aspect of historical tradition, namely, that the new must of necessity be prepared for and arise out of that which has gone before. And, since historical tradition includes both historical events and the interpretation of those events, this also means that the interpretation of new historical events must of necessity be prepared for and arise out of the experience of (or interpretation of) previous historical events. In terms of our previous discussions of this matter this means that we come to our encounter with historical events with a "pre-understanding" which has grown up out of previous historical experience.

(1) Tillich, Paul, The Interpretation of History, p.253.

This point of view, which Tillich expressed in 1929, finds a more recent expression in his Systematic Theology where it is explicitly applied to our understanding of Scripture. In speaking of the sources of theology he admits that the Bible is "the basic source", but he rejects "the assertion of neo-orthodox biblicism that the Bible is the only source". He goes on to tell us why he makes this rejection.

> The biblical message cannot be understood and could not have been received had there been no preparation for it in human religion and culture. And the biblical message would not have become a message for anyone, including the theologian himself, without the experiencing participation of the church and every Christian. (1)

This is obviously the same understanding which we have spoken of earlier in terms of "pre-understanding". The past experience of mankind which makes up this "pre-understanding" is not simply the sum total of what has happened. The past also includes a potentiality, which we have termed "pre-understanding", to shape ensuing historical development; and it is in this ensuing development that the potentialities of the past become actualities. For example, one of the potential abilities developed in the history of the Hebrew people was that of being able to receive the Christ. And when that potentiality was actualized in the event of Jesus of Nazareth, then that event in turn modified and became a part of our evaluation of the past history of the Hebrew people. (2)

(1) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, pp. 34-35.
(2) Cf. ibid., p. 276.

Tillich develops this point of view, maintaining that the "final revelation" of Jesus as the Christ cannot be understood as an isolated event. "It presupposed a revelatory history which was a preparation for it and in which it was received. It could not have occurred without having been expected, and it could not have been expected if it had not been preceded by other revelations which had become distorted."(1) This previous revelation had become distorted; but, in Bultmann's words, "not purely negative".

If, on the contrary, this process had not taken place, then we must assume a revelation which is a "strange" body; one which had no relation whatsoever to human existence, and which was received in spite of there being no categories in which to receive it. Revelation, in this view, becomes God's answer to questions which were/are never asked. This view of revelation, Tillich rightly maintains, dehumanizes man and demonizes God. If a reply is made to this position to the effect that "with God all things are possible", then it is difficult to know what to say to this. What does "all things are possible" mean in this phrase? How else can God act than "through men according to their nature and receptiveness"?

Tillich maintains that it is possible to discern the development of the "pre-understanding" necessary for the reception of

(1) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, p. 137.

revelation. This preparation is in three stages: conservation, criticism and anticipation. The first stage is present when a priestly system is present to preserve the sacred object given in an earlier revelation, e.g., the Mosaic law. The function of the priest is to enable succeeding generations to enter into the revelatory situation which is related to that in which the revelation was originally received, and thus to enable succeeding generations to make that revelation their "own". Only on this basis of priestly conservation is the second stage possible; namely, the critical attack on the sacramental confusion between the medium and content of revelation.

This second and critical stage takes three forms: the mystical, the rational and the prophetic. The most significant of these is the latter. The prophetic stage is not to be confined to the Old Testament, for it is operative throughout the history of the Church. The distinguishing characteristic of the prophetic stage, in contrast to the mystical, is the concrete foundation of its attack upon a given sacramental system. "Prophetism tries to shape reality in the power of the divine form... It promises fulfillment in the future (however transcendent the future may be understood to be), and it does not point to an eternity which is equally near to every moment of time, as mysticism does."(1)

(1) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, p. 142.

This anticipation of a future fulfillment is the third stage in the preparation for final revelation. It comes into being during the course of the prophetic struggle with a distorted sacramentalism; a struggle marked by a dynamic process of acceptance, rejection and transformation of the distorted sacramentalism. This process continues today without and within the Church by individuals who are still in a preparatory stage and have not yet received the final revelation of Jesus as the Christ.

The Method of Correlation. This understanding of the place of preparation and "pre-understanding" in the reception of revelation does not simply form part of the content of the Systematic Theology. It is also the basis of the method (and resulting structure) of that work, and Tillich refers to this method as the "method of correlation".

> In using the method of correlation, systematic theology proceeds in the following way: it makes an analysis of the human situation out of which the existential questions arise, and it demonstrates that the symbols used in the Christian message are the answers to these questions. (1)

In other words, man's "pre-understanding" enables him to formulate questions to which succeeding and final revelation is the answer; and one of the tasks of Tillich's theology is to correlate these questions and its answer.

(1) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, p. 62.

There are several points which should be made about this method. First of all, as in all of Tillich's theological system, it is recognized that this method is operative within what he refers to as the "theological circle". The concept of the theological circle asserts that it is impossible to arrive at the contents of any theological system by inductive or deductive means. Rather, the content is decided by "individual experience, traditional valuation and personal commitment". The philosopher of religion works within the same circle; but for the Christian theologian the circle is even narrower, for he has added the criterion of the Christian message——Jesus as the Christ. Thus the content of any theological system is present from the beginning; the use of reason within the theological circle being to elucidate what is already present, rather than proving or inductively or deductively arriving at the content.(1) Now, since the method of correlation is within the theological circle, the analysis of the human situation out of which the existential questions arise (and to which the knowledge of revelation is the answer) is not just any analysis; rather it is the analysis made from within the theological circle. (It would be possible to make many other analyses of the human situation, e.g., one which does not pose any questions at all,) Or, to put this in another way: It is not just any analysis, but one which is made upon the basis of the "pre-understanding" given in previous revelation.

(1) Cf., Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, pp. 8-11.

The second point which needs to be made about the method of correlation is that it is a tool; one which must validate itself through the results which can be obtained in using it. A third and very important point is that the answers given to the questions posed by this method do not themselves derive from the analysis. Rather the answers

> ...are "spoken" to human existence from beyond it. Otherwise they would "not be answers"...But the relation is more involved than this, since it is correlation. There is a mutual dependence between question and answer. In respect to content the Christian answers are dependent on the revelatory events in which they appear; in respect to form they are dependent on the structure of the questions which they answer. (1)

This last statement may seem to infringe upon the sovereignity of God. But this is not actually so. It is true that "God in his abysmal nature(2) is in no way dependent upon man, [but] God in his self-manifestation to man is dependent on the way man receives his manifestation."(3)

This brings us to the fourth and last comment we want to make upon the method of correlation. Although the method of correlation is a tool, nevertheless it is not an "indifferent net" in which reality is caught. Rather, like all cognitive methods, it reveals something about reality itself. In theology the existential question which receives divine answers reveals

(1) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, p. 64. Italics Tillich's.

(2) In a footnote Tillich equates this with Calvin's "In his essence."

(3) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, p. 61.

that the situation or event out of which the question arises is not self-sufficient.(1)

Because this is so, the method of correlation has always been used in varying degrees of self-consciousness. Tillich cites, as an example, the beginning of Calvin's Institutes: "The knowledge of ourselves is not only an incitement to seek after God, but likewise a considerable assistance towards finding him." Nor is this to be confined to Christian theology.

> Revelation answers questions which have been asked and always will be asked because they are "we ourselves." Man is the question he asks about himself, before any question has been formulated. It is, therefore, not surprising that the basic questions were formulated very early in the history of mankind. Every analysis of the mythological material shows this. Nor is it surprising that the same questions appear in early childhood...(2)

The knowledge of God, then, is not received as a "strange object". It is received on the basis of a "not purely negative" "pre-understanding". This "pre-understanding" incorporates elements of previous revelation, together with an analysis of the existential situation of the one who receives the revelation, e.g., the Hebrews' questioning about and anticipation of the Messiah. Or, more concisely, revelation proceeds on the basis of revelation. To ask about the "first" human self-questioning and the "first" revelation is an impossible question. Just as

(1) Cf. Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, p. 60.

(2) Ibid., p. 62.

we saw in our earlier discussion that the possibility of historical inquiry presupposes previous historical experience, so the receiving of revelation presupposes a previous reception of revelation. It is this previous revelation which is the source of religious "pre-understanding"; or, to express it in Tillich's terminology, it is the source of the questions to which the content of subsequent revelation is correlated as answer. Because this is so, some use of the method of correlation is necessary in theology.

b. Subject and object.

With this presentation of Tillich's view as to the part played by "pre-understanding" both in religion (the receiving of revelation) and theological inquiry (thought about revelation), we are in a position to go on and examine his approach to a problem which is a central concern of our thesis; namely, the proper relation of subject and object in historical and theological inquiry. He states the problem in this way:

> Knowing is a form of union. In every act of knowledge the knower and that which is known are united; the gap between subject and object is overcome. The subject "grasps" the object, adapts it to itself, and, at the same time, adapts itself to the object. (1)

This is a point of view which has been emphasized in all of the men whom we have been studying. It is a necessary con-

(1) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, p. 94.

dition of historical knowledge. Tillich, however, goes on, as the others have not, to stress that there is another aspect to knowledge.

> But the union of knowledge is a peculiar one; it is a union through separation. Detachment is the condition of cognitive union. In order to know, one must "look" at a thing, and, in order to look at a thing, one must be "at a distance". Cognitive distance is the presupposition of cognitive union. Most philosophers have seen both sides.....The unity of distance and union is the ontological problem of knowledge...The unity is never completely destroyed; but there is also estrangement. The particular object is strange as such, but it contains essential structures with which the cognitive subject is essentially united and which it can remember when looking at things. (1)

Ontological and technical reason. In relation to this characteristic of knowledge Tillich distinguishes between ontological and technical reason. The former

> ...is predominant in the classical tradition from Parmenides to Hegel...it is a thinking which is at the same time life and joy in the "absolute truth" (Hegel), etc. Classical reason is Logos, whether it is understood in a more intuitive or in a more critical way. Its cognitive nature is one element in addition to others; it is cognitive and aesthetic, theoretical and practical, detached and passionate, subjective and objective. The denial of reason in the classical sense is antihuman because it is antidivine. (2)

This unified and comprehensive type of reason has always been accompanied by, and is now replaced by what Tillich characterizes as "technical" reason. Here only the cognitive side of

(1) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, pp. 94 - 95.

(2) ibid., p. 72.

the former concept of reason remains, and this only insofar as it deals with the discovery of means for ends.

> ...reason in the technical sense determines the means while accepting the ends from "somewhere else"...The consequence is that the ends are provided by nonrational forces, either by positive traditions or by arbitrary decisions serving the will to power. Critical reason has ceased to exercise its controlling function over norms and ends. At the same time the noncognitive sides of reason have been consigned to the irrelevance of pure subjectivity....Neither structures, Gestalt processes, values, nor meanings can be grasped without ontological reason. (1)

"Philosophy of history" in general and Marxism in particular are examples of the use of "technical" reason.

Receiving and controlling knowledge. Another expression of this same polarity is given in the terms "receiving" and "controlling" knowledge. "Controlling" knowledge is the outstanding example of "technical" reason. This kind of knowledge transforms the object into a completely conditioned and calculable "thing", depriving it of any subjective quality. In any act of knowledge there is a certain logical objectification. This is implied in the quotation at the beginning of this section describing the subject-object polarity of knowledge. However in "controlling" knowledge the objectification is not only logical, but also ontological and ethical.(2) In "receiving" knowledge, in contrast:

(1) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, p.73.

(2) See The Protestant Era, Nisbet and Co., Ltd., London, 1951, pp. 105ff., for an investigation of the relation between "controlling" knowledge and the inability of the contemporary world to respond to sacraments and sacramental things.

> ...one could say [metaphorically] that as we look at things so things look at us with the expectation of being received and the offer of enriching us in cognitive union. (1)

And more prosaically:

> Neither actually or potentially is ["receiving knowledge"] determined by the means-ends relationship. Receiving knowledge takes the object into itself, into union with the subject. This includes the emotional element, from which controlling knowledge tries to detach itself as much as possible. Emotion is the vehicle for receiving cognition. But the vehicle is far from making the content itself emotional. The content is rational, something to be verified, to be looked at with critical caution. Nevertheless, nothing can be received cognitively without emotion. (2)

Tillich makes this final characterization of "receiving" knowledge in a way which is reminiscent of Croce, Collingwood, and--although the terminology is very different--Vico.

> The unity of union and detachment is precisely described by the term "understanding". Its literal meaning, to stand under the place where the object of knowledge stands, implies intimate participation...Understanding another person or a historic figure, the life of an animal or a religious text, involves an amalgamation of controlling and receiving knowledge, of union and detachment, of participation and analysis. (3)

Exactly how would Tillich apply this understanding to the study of history? We do not know fully, since the part of his

(1) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, p. 97.

(2) ibid., p. 98.

(3) ibid., p. 98.

Systematic Theology dealing with history has not yet appeared.(1) However, in an essay written in 1929 we are given a good indication of what his answer will be. He writes: "...any... separation of the objective existence of history and a subjective judgment about it, is thoroughly to be repudiated."(2) The understanding of history which Tillich is repudiating here is the same as that which we have seen repudiated in various ways in Part II, i.e., history as objective fact or chronicle to which a meaning derived from some external source is subsequently applied. He gives his own suggestive but slightly obscure justification for this statement.

> History cannot be ascertained objectively, for meaning and direction of time cannot be ascertained objectively....Single tendencies of direction and fulfillments of meaning are manifest. The decision, however...about history and non-history generally, cannot be made by analytical efforts [alone].
>
> We are demanding a decision against the sense-defying retraction of time into space, a decision for meaning against the ultimate meaninglessness of reality. How is such a decision possible?... only a concrete, meaning-giving principle can carry the decision. (3)

The "concrete, meaning-giving" principle is supremely the

(1) In the "Preface" to volume II Tillich tells us that in order to avoid further delays in its publication, he "came to an agreement with the publisher that the third part of the system, Existence and the Christ should appear as the second volume, and that the fourth and fifth parts, "Life and the Spirit" and "History and the Kingdom of God", should follow——I hope in the not too distant future." (p.vii.)

(2) Tillich, Paul, The Interpretation of History, p.249.

(3) ibid., p.248. Any circular interpretation of history using quasi-biological categories is an example of a "sense-defying retraction of time into space".

receiving of Jesus as the Christ; a matter which we will deal with later in this chapter. However at this point we want to observe that it is a concrete event[1] which can give meaning to history; an event or events which are both objectively and subjectively received. In this way and not in the objective collection and analysis of facts, nor through the use of "spatial" (i.e., timeless or non-historical) concepts are we enabled to understand history. In this we see both similarities and dissimilarities with the views of Vico, Croce and Collingwood. The very important similarity is the agreement that history can only be understood through concrete event received in the way Tillich indicates. The dissimilarity lies in the importance which Tillich attaches to one particular event: Jesus as the Christ. (We will evaluate this when we come to discuss the fact that in Tillich's thought the question of history resolves itself into the Christological question, and the Christological question into the question of history).

This same point of view, expressed some thirty years ago, finds a more recent, and incidentally clearer, expression in the following passage from Tillich's Systematic Theology. The context of the discussion at this point in the book is that of revelation, but it is equally applicable to the understanding of history.

(1) In the immediately preceding quotation Tillich speaks of a "concrete principle". By this awkward phrasing is meant a concrete event which becomes a means or principle of interpretation.

> Revelation always is a subjective and an objective event in strict interdependence. Someone is grasped by the manifestation of the mystery; this is the subjective side of the event. Something occurs through which the mystery of revelation grasps someone; this is the objective side. These two sides cannot be separated...Revelation is not real without the receiving side, and it is not real without the giving side.(1)(2)

With this summary of the place of subject and object in Tillich's thought, we go on to consider two distinctive ways in which this approach to knowledge is used.

c. "Re-enactment".

We have examined Tillich's view of the preparation which must take place before revelation can be received; a view which can accurately and briefly be referred to as "pre-understanding". We have also looked at his understanding of the relation of subject and object in general, and in theological inquiry in particular. These two matters are of a piece. According to

(1) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, p. 111.

(2) Cf. Systematic Theology, II, p. 180. Here, at the end of the Christological discussion which makes up the second volume of his Systematic Theology, Tillich writes as follows: "Man is not only determined by essential goodness and by existential estrangement; he is also determined by the ambiguities of life and history. Without an analysis of these characteristics of his being, everything so far remains abstract. Also, the Christ is not an isolated event which happened "once upon a time"; he is the power of the New Being preparing his decisive manifestation in Jesus as the Christ in all preceding history and actualizing himself as the Christ in all subsequent history." Italics mine.

Tillich's understanding of the relation of subject and object the object of inquiry is not a "strange body" to the subject, i.e., the inquirer. According to the Tillich's view of the place of "pre-understanding", and the related "method of correlation", the theologian enters into the problem or situation before him in order to receive the answer to it. In this way the theologian, or simply the Christian, enters into the power of the answer given by God to man. Thus the answer received through revelation is not a "strange body" to the theologian.

Implied in all of this is the variously named concept which we have encountered frequently in Part II and also in our examination of Bultmann, i.e., "re-enactment", recreation, reliving, etc. By these terms is meant the process whereby the historian, theologian or other inquirer enters into ("re-enacts", recreates) the object of his study in order to understand (stand under) it. "Re-enactment" is obviously impossible if subject and object are not mutually involved, and if there is not some "pre-understanding" on the part of the inquirer of the context of meanings of which the object of study is a part.

This similarity between the approach to historical and theological knowledge, however, should not obscure a fundamental difference. (This difference will become clearer later in this chapter, but it is necessary to say a few words about it at this point.) The historian attempting to understand Caesar's invasion

of Britain "re-enacts" that invasion in his own thinking. His conclusions are the results of the "pre-understanding" he brings to the investigation, of his analysis of the relevant material, of deductive and inductive reasoning about the event and so on.

Now when the theologian approaches, for example, the Epistle to the Romans in order that it might become the Word of God for him[1], the process is both similar and different. It is similar in that here too the theologian brings his "pre-understanding"; here too he enters into a process of "re-enactment" in order to understand Paul; and here too analytic, deductive and inductive thinking play a part. But the appropriation of Paul's conclusions do not flow in a straightforward manner out of this process. As for Paul, so for the theologian, the conclusions are spoken "from beyond" to the situation. More specifically, the "re-enactment" of Paul's situation opens the theologian to the possibility of receiving Jesus the Christ as the answer. The process of "pre-understanding" and analysis determines the form in which the answer is received (Hebrew and Greek thought forms and not Taoist), but it does not determine the content of the answer. This is obviously in contrast to the investigation of Caesar's invasion of Britain.

Freedom and fate. Having made this distinction, we now turn to make explicit some of the implications of this process.

(1) Tillich refers to this as "secondary revelation" in contrast to the original "primary revelation". See infra., pp. 356ff.

Tillich speaks of two levels in historical investigation; both of which we are familiar with. The first is the philological study of documents of all kinds through a study of script, verb forms, the comparison of texts and so on. Here the results of historical inquiry have a high degree of assurance, and can often be demonstrated to anyone able and willing to examine the relevant evidence.

The second level is a "selective and interpretative" one.

> The selective and interpretative side, however, without which no historiography ever has been written, is based on participation in terms of understanding and explanation. Without a union of the nature of the historian with that of his object, no significant history is possible. But <u>with</u> this union the same period and the same historical figure have received many different historically significant interpretations on the basis of the same verified material. Verification in this respect means to illuminate, to make understandable, to give a meaningful and consistent picture. The historian's task is to "make alive" what has "passed away." The test of his cognitive success, of the truth of his picture, is whether or not he is able to do this. This test is not final, and every historical work is a risk. But it is a test, and experiential, though not an experimental, verification. (1)

The period(s) which is not open to this process is a "dark age", and no genuine history is possible of such a period; e.g., in the case of the historian who makes the Enlightenment an absolute standpoint, presents a chronicle of the Middle Ages and declares it to be a "dark age".

(1) Tillich, Paul, <u>Systematic Theology</u>, I, pp. 103-104. Italics Tillich's.

> Only that reality can be grasped with which the seeker is connected through history and fate. This does not remove the obligation to make an effort for all reality, partly because each is connected with all, and partly because no one and no time knows a priori whither the way of knowledge is leading. Yet individuals and eras must sometimes know when to halt instinctively and when to press forward is futile. It is necessary to realize this in order to meet the arrogance of the illusionary absolute standpoint in thinking...(1)

This passage brings us to an element in human knowledge which is operative when we reach the "selective and interpretive" level of inquiry; and this element is that of freedom and fate. In genuine history "the understanding of the past becomes a living, creative deed, recreating the past——an achievement of great historians"(2); and in this achievement freedom and fate play a part.

By "fate" is meant the "fateful connection" or involvement of the historian with the event which he is studying. This connection is improper when it is taken to mean uncontrolled subjectiveness; for this is always "arbitrariness and servitude, separating us from the truth." On the other hand the "fateful connection" is essential when it is properly understood as meaning the denial of the absolute object, of the estrangement of subject and object; when it is understood as meaning the involvement of the historian with the object of his study. This means

(1) Tillich, Paul, The Interpretation of History, pp. 150-151.

(2) ibid., p. 147.

that the attitude of knowledge is to be characterized by intimacy and nearness to life. "The community between the knowing and the known must be expressed in every scientific work."(1) This is what Tillich calls a "community of fate".

> Knowing is a form of union. In every act of knowledge the knower and that which is known are united; the gap between the subject and object is overcome. (2)

In the context of a discussion of the writing of history, Tillich elaborates this point of view.

> When spirit understands spirit it interprets at the same time. The object receives a meaning which is born out of the interaction of that which understands with that which is understood. Thus historical understanding comes to be a function of life through which the past receives meaning from the present and the present from the past. The spirit is not a thing which can be studied by spirit without undergoing alternation; spirit yields itself, sacrifices itself and becomes creative in its contact with spirit. (3)

If "fate" is one half of this element in knowledge, "freedom" is the other half. Tillich means by "freedom", "freedom to decide".

> All knowledge, even the most exact, the most subject to methodical technique, contains fundamental interpretations rooted neither in formal evidence, nor in material probability, but in original views, in basic decisions. (4)

(1) Tillich, Paul, The Interpretation of History, p.148.

(2) Systematic Theology, I, p.94.

(3) The Religious Situation, p.67.

(4) The Interpretation of History, p.143.

This is just the situation in history too.

> When the collection of material and even ingenious judgment concerning the facts stop, historical understanding has manifestly the character of concrete decisions. (1)

Vico's decision that events are a part of an "ideal and eternal history" is of this nature. So too is Croce's belief that Spirit manifests and developes itself in the course of history. Collingwood's belief that the mind of the historian can enter into and recreate the essential thinking and action of the participants in the event being studied is still another example of the role of decision in the writing of history. These three positions, which we have cited as examples, do not come directly out of the formal evidence; a fact which is verified by the existence of various historians and philosophers who are critical of the respective positions taken by Vico, Croce and Collingwood. These critics have made a different decision on the basis of the same formal evidence. But the freedom to decide has been exercised in every case.

Summary. As a result of the presence of freedom and fate in knowledge, we are enabled to say that historical knowledge can only be arrived at by bringing the historical method which we have described as "re-enactment" to bear upon events. We are

(1) Tillich, Paul, The Interpretation of History, p.144.

using fate in the sense of the connection or involvement of the historian (i.e., the historian's fate) with the event (i.e., the fate of the event). This can take place only through the acknowledgement of the decisive importance of historical event, and the recreation of the event in the mind of the historian. The same situation prevails in regard to freedom, i.e., freedom to decide. Decision means decision (interpretation) about concrete events, and there can be no genuine decision about events from which one stands apart. Freedom and fate belong together.

That which we have previously discussed under the term of "re-enactment", and which we wish to continue to refer to under that term, Tillich has described in terms of "freedom" and "fate". In both cases what is being said is that the meaningful interpretation of events is dependent upon bringing the process of genuine historical inquiry to bear upon those events; a process which we have described in detail as it appears in each of the five men whom we have studied, and which, with surprisingly little variation, has as its basis the rejection of the Cartesian subject-object dualism and the recognition of the necessity of what we have referred to as "pre-understanding". Other understandings of the correct approach to historical events would lead to other results; but the understanding presented here is a consequence of the decision that genuine knowledge of historical events is arrived at through the method of historical inquiry

which we have presented here. Which is correct is itself a matter of decision and experiential verification.

d. Knowledge and historical event.

Tillich affirms the necessity of historical event for knowledge; and he builds this position through the unique use of two words: Logos and Kairos.(1) Logos is associated with pure form, eternal laws, the historically unconditioned etc. Kairos refers to the "right time" or "fulfilled time".(2) As an example of this latter term, Hegel's philosophy is a manifestation of the Kairos of German idealism. The Kairos is of necessity expressed through historical event; and can be understood only by recreating historical event. It is to be contrasted with chronos which is "empty time".

What would be the nature of knowledge which is arrived at apart from the Kairos; apart from participation in or "re-enactment" of historical event? In order to arrive at knowledge in this way it must be assumed that the inquirer has a very unusual, indeed an almost incomprehensible, position in which he completely empties himself in order to simply accept that which he perceives. Any idea of what we have referred to as "pre-under-

(1) We will attempt to follow Tillich's (not entirely consistent) practice of placing kairos and logos in italics when the emphasis is upon their Greek origin and usage, but of taking the terms out of italics when the emphasis is upon his own special use of them as terms in contemporary theological discussion.

(2) Cf. Tillich, Paul, The Religious Situation, p. 176.

standing" must, of course, be eliminated; for that idea is based upon participation in former historical events or Karoi. Or, it might be said, that this approach to knowledge is made possible when that which is perceived enables the inquirer to "recollect" "eternal essentialities". Tillich characterizes such attitudes as being those in which there is, first, a suppression of or "asceticism" toward the historical event or Kairos; and, secondly in which there is an emphasis upon or Eros toward pure form or the Logos. "That is the attitude of pure theory; asceticism toward the Kairos, Eros toward the Logos; thereon rests the possibility of regarding the world as a system of eternal forms."(1)

Tillich goes on to discuss whether this asceticism toward the Kairos is a real attitude, or whether it is only an abstraction. His conclusion is that it appears as a possibility only to those ages where there is a static interpretation of nature, and in which "the intuitive mind is assumed to have an absolute position beyond time." Examples of this situation would be Greek civilization, the Middle Ages with their eternal forms of revelation, and "modern natural science which has dissolved [time] into a dimension of space (the fourth dimension)."

The determinative influence of the belief in the possibility of asceticism toward the Kairos came to an end with the breakdown of the eternal forms of the Middle Ages. These were replaced by

(1) Tillich, Paul, The Interpretation of History, p. 130.

the realization of the distorted character of human existence, and the impossibility of the absolute position for the subject in which he lays hold upon the eternal forms. With this new understanding comes the necessity of recognizing the element of historical fate in the object of study and in the subject, i.e., everything is historically conditioned. At the same time the necessity and freedom of decision is recognized, i.e., there can be no straightforward laying hold of the eternal forms, but rather a process of decision and interpretation of the meaning of the distorted truth which finds expression in historical events. "Fate and freedom reach into the act of knowledge and make it an historical deed: the Kairos determines the Logos".(1)

> ...there can be no asceticism toward the demand of the Kairos, no avoidance of the decision. Idealism and supernaturalism, inner-worldly and super-worldly establishment of an absolute position of the subject, are flights from decision. Asceticism is a flight from the decisions which continually have to be made in this distorted existence. (2)

In this way Tillich maintains that the Logos (the idea, understanding) can only be grasped in terms of historical event. However, this is not to be taken as meaning that the Logos has some sort of theoretical existence apart from its fate or actualization in history. The idea and its historical fate belong together.

(1) Tillich, Paul, The Interpretation of History, p.135.

(2) ibid. p.135.

> Essence and fate are not strange to each other: that is the conclusion of this argument. Fate belongs to essential being...Recognizing reality is recognizing reality as it stands in the historical fate, not beyond it...The participation of the things [the Kairoi] in the idea [the Logos] corresponds just as seriously to the participation of the idea in the things. (1)

Another way of expressing this is to say that the idea is not complete in itself. The idea can only become manifest in event, and the manifestation is its realization——its reality. The contrast of essence and appearance is removed.(2)

In The Religious Situation, where the point of view which we have been discussing receives a concrete application to contemporary social life, the concept of the realization of idea in historical event is expressed in terms throughly reminiscent of Vico, Collingwood and especially Croce.

> ...the spiritual never appears to us save in individual forms, as the history of creative individual events...(3)

> The history of spirit is the history of the spiritual creations, not insofar as they exist [i.e., not as chronicle] but insofar as they are meaningful. Its purpose is to understand the relations of meaning which connect spiritual movements...Hence the history of spirit [or simply history] is closely related to the constructive, systematic sciences of spirit or mind [e.g., empirical methodology]. Indeed the constructive effort often proceeds by means of historical understanding of classic figures of the past [i.e., through the study of history] ——an indication of the extent to which insight into the nature of spirit and its original,

(1) Tillich, Paul, The Interpretation of History, p.164.

(2) Cf. ibid., p.165.

(3) Tillich, Paul, The Religious Situation, p.65.

creative character dominates historical thought.(1)

To know an idea is to know how it came into being (Vico); it is to recreate the thought of its originator (Collingwood). In historical events the spirit receives its manifestation and development (Croce). The Kairos determines the Logos.

e. The relation of theology to other forms of knowledge: preliminary and ultimate concerns.

We have described the hermeneutic principles which are found in Tillich's theology. Although these principles appear in the context of theological discussion, they are applicable at many points to other forms of inquiry. To what extent is theology and its hermeneutics like other forms of knowledge? This is the question which we want to explore now; and specifically, what is the relationship between theology and philosophy, and theology and history?

Tillich states the problem of the relationship between theology and other forms of knowledge in the following passage.

> Theology claims that it constitutes a special realm of knowledge, that it deals with a special object and employs a special method. This claim places the theologian under the obligation of giving an account of the way in which he relates theology to other forms of knowledge. He must

(1) Tillich, Paul, The Religious Situation, pp. 68-69.

> answer two questions: What is the relationship of theology to the special sciences (Wissenschaften) and what is its relationship to philosophy? (1)

We may reformulate these questions in accord with the particular interests of this thesis. In such a reformulation these two questions become: (1) What is the relationship between that part of theology known as Biblical hermeneutics and the special science known as history? (2) What is the relationship between theology, and especially Biblical hermeneutics, and philosophy? In asking this pair of questions we will also be wondering, in view of our previous discussion of the way in which philosophy is to a considerable extent dependent upon the historical method, to what extent these two questions are a single question. Here we may anticipate our discussion for a moment and say that, on the basis of what we have already said about Tillich's hermeneutics, we would not expect him to answer these two questions in such a way as to draw a radical distinction between theology and other forms of knowledge.

Dealing with the first of these two questions, Tillich finds the characteristic difference between theological inquiry (including Biblical hermeneutics) and historical inquiry in that only the subject matter of the former is of "ultimate concern" to us.

(1) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, p.18.

> Our ultimate concern is that which determines our being or not-being. Only those statements are theological which deal with their object in so far as it can become a matter of being or not-being for us. (1)

"Being" in its use here does not designate existence in space and time, but "the structure, the meaning and the aim of existence".(2) Other forms of knowledge such as historical insights which are not a "matter of being or not-being for us" are characterized as being "preliminary concerns". Negatively, the relation of "preliminary" to "ultimate" concerns can be one of indifference, e.g., the indifference of the New Testament theologian to the historian or psychologist. This results in a fragmentary view of the world. Or, again negatively, the "preliminary concern" can be elevated to an "ultimate concern", e.g., as in the various religious nationaliems. This is idolatry. But there is a third and positive relation of "preliminary" to "ultimate" concerns; this takes place when the former becomes vehicles to reveal to us some aspect of the latter. Taking historical insights as an example of "preliminary concerns", Tillich says:

> ...historical insights...can become objects of theology, not from the point of view of their cognitive form, but from the point of view of their power of revealing some aspects of that which concerns us ultimately in and through their cognitive form. (3)

(1) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, p.14. Italics Tillich's

(2) Cf. ibid p.14.

(3) ibid., p.13.

Thus the details of the Exodus in the Old Testament and the birth stories in the New Testament are not of ultimate concern. Whether or not the Red Sea divided, or whether or not Jesus of Nazareth was born of a virgin, does not determine our being or not-being. And since this is the situation, theology has neither the need nor the right to prejudice historical investigation in these areas.(1) However, these two problematical incidents have, in and through their cognitive form, the power of revealing to us some aspect of that which concerns us ultimately; as do also many other better attested events, e.g., Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist.

This gives us an indication of Tillich's conception of the relationship between theology (including Biblical hermeneutics) and the special science called history. But there still remains the second half of the distinction which Tillich has drawn between theology and other forms of knowledge; namely, the distinction between theology and philosophy. The difficulty here is, as Tillich says, and as was evident in our examination of Croce and Collingwood, the fact that there is no generally accepted definition of philosophy. However, Tillich suggests that philosophy is "that cognitive approach to reality in which reality as such is the object."(2) Inquiring into the

(1) Cf. Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, p.18.

(2) ibid. p.18. Italics Tillich's.

nature of reality as such means inquiring into those structures, categories and concepts which are presupposed in the cognitive encounter with every realm of reality. (In the realm of history such structures are, Tillich says, "time, freedom, accident, purpose etc.") From this point of view philosophy is by definition critical. It separates the multifarious materials of experience from those structures which make experience possible.(1) In defence of this definition of philosophy, Tillich says that no philosophy can avoid the ontological question, for "every epistemology contains an implicit ontology".(2) Even logical positivism betrays an inability to look at itself critically when it supposes it has avoided the ontological question.(3)

However it is not the asking of the ontological question which distinguishes theology and philosophy. The Bible itself uses categories and concepts which describe the structure of existence, e.g., time, space, cause, thing, subject, nature, knowledge etc. In theology these same concepts of necessity must appear and be developed. "The attempt of biblicism to avoid nonbiblical, ontological terms is doomed to failure as surely as are the corresponding philosophical attempts."(4) The difference

(1) Cf. Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, pp. 18-19.

(2) Ibid., p.19.

(3) Cf. ibid., p.20. "What is the relation of signs, symbols, or logical operations to reality?"

(4) Ibid., p.21.

does not lie here. Rather, the difference lies in the way in which the ontological question is asked. Briefly: "Philosophy deals with the structure of being in itself; theology deals with the meaning of being for us."(1)

Elaborating this, Tillich sees the distinction manifesting itself at three points. First, there is the difference of cognitive attitude. For the philosopher it is one of detached objectivity toward being and its structures; for the theologian it is an attitude of involvement and commitment to the content he expounds. Secondly, there is a difference in sources. The philosopher looks at the whole of reality; there is an identity between the logos of reality as a whole and the logos working in him; and therefore there is no particular place to stand in order to discover the structure of being. The theologian, however, must look where that which concerns him ultimately is manifest; namely, the Logos "who became flesh" (and not the universal logos) as that is expressed in the Church, its traditions and its present reality. Thirdly, there is a difference in content. The philosopher deals with causality, analyses historical time, defines nature and history in their mutual limits etc. The theologian, on the other hand, relates the same categories and concepts to the quest for the "new being" brought to us by Jesus the Christ. Or again, he relates the structures of life

(1) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, p.22.

to the creative ground of life and the structure of spirit to the divine Spirit.(1)

Thus there is a divergence between philosophy and theology. However——and this is very characteristic of Tillich——this is not the last word. The divergence between philosophy and theology is balanced by an equally strong convergence. He maintains that the philosopher

> ...is a theologian in the degree to which his existential situation and his ultimate concern shape his philosophical vision. He is a theologian in the degree to which his intuition of the universal logos of the structure of reality as a whole is formed by a particular logos which appears to him on his particular place and reveals to him the meaning of the whole. And he is a theologian in the degree to which the particular logos is a matter of active commitment within a special community. There is hardly a historically significant philosopher who does not show these marks of a theologian. But the philosopher does not intend to be a theologian. He wants to serve the universal logos. He tries to turn away from his existential situation, including his ultimate concern, toward a place above all particular places, toward pure reality. The conflict between the intention of becoming universal and the destiny of remaining particular characterizes every philosophical existence. It is its burden and its greatness. (2)

These then are the functional characteristics of the theologian which most, if not all, significant philosophers share: existential involvement and ultimate concern; the importance of the concrete particular for understanding reality as a whole;

(1) Cf. Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, pp.22-24.

(2) ibid., p.25.

and active commitment within a special community.(1)

Finally, we want to ask if what Tillich says about the philosopher in this context could also be applied to the historian. We are led to ask this question by the statements which Vico, Croce and Collingwood have made——each in their own way——of the interdependence of philosophy and history. Looking first at the three characteristics which Tillich says distinguishes the philosopher from the theologian, it is clear that they also apply to the historian. They apply to the historian in that he, like the philosopher, has an attitude of detached objectivity toward his subject matter (in the sense that it is not the attitude of commitment operative with the theologian); they apply to the historian also in that he looks for the logos in the whole of reality, and not in the Logos who became flesh; and finally they apply to the historian in that he deals with his subject matter for its own sake, and does not attempt to relate it to the quest for the "new being".

(1) For the reader who is not familiar with Tillich, it will be worthwhile to call attention to the way in which the preceding argument has moved. (1) Theology claims that it is a special realm of knowledge. (2) This claim necessitates a distinction from Wissenschaften, the concerns of which are "preliminary" in nature. (3) Yet these concerns can point to aspects of the eternal. (4) The claim of step (1) also necessitates a distinction from philosophy. (5) Philosophy deals with the ontological question. (6) But so does theology. (7) Theology and philosophy deal with this question in distinctive ways. (8) Nevertheless there are certain significant similarities between philosophy and theology.

The ability to give this sort of analysis grows out of living ultimate concern on the boundary between philosophy and theology; not sitting there in order to point an accusing finger.

Turning to the four characteristics which Tillich sees as tending to unite the philosopher to the theologian, we also see that they serve to unite the historian to both philosopher and theologian. First, like the philosopher and theologian, the historian does not avoid the ontological question; for the historian's inquiry not only proceeds upon the basis of certain ontological assumptions (e.g., the rational nature of man, cause, the high status accorded to events in space and time etc.), but the results of his inquiry enlarge our knowledge of those assumptions——most obviously, they enlarge our knowledge of man's nature. Secondly, as we saw most clearly in Croce, the historian's approach to these ontological questions, and his whole historical vision, partakes of the ultimate concern which is so important and so explicit in the work of the theologian. The third characteristic which Tillich gives as uniting the philosopher and the theologian applies so obviously to the theologian that we need only mention it, namely, the importance of the concrete particular for understanding reality as a whole. And finally, the historian, like the philosopher and theologian, has an active commitment within a special community; a fact which we have had occasion to refer to before. This community is the community of historians devoted to the discovery of historical truth; a community ready to go into academic battle against anyone who attempts to interfere with the integrity of historical inquiry.

So it is that when Tillich speaks of the distinctions between the philosopher and the theologian, what he says could also be used to distinguish the historian from the theologian; and when he speaks of the characteristics which tend to draw the philosopher and the theologian together, what he says could also be applied to the historian and the theologian. In saying that the philosopher and the historian share certain characteristic differences from and similarities to the theologian, we do not mean to say or imply that philosophy and history are one and the same. But this comparison does help to illuminate the character of all three disciplines, and of their relationship to one another.

3. The Problem of Biblical Hermeneutics.

In the preceding discussion we have seen that while there is a difference between the hermeneutic principles appropriate to theological inquiry and those appropriate to other forms of inquiry, this distinction is not a clear cut one. The two overlap at a number of points. In this Tillich is in agreement with Bultmann, who, as we saw, wishes to emphasize the similarities between general and Biblical hermeneutics. Now, on the basis of this proceeding general discussion, we wish to go and examine some of the distinctively theological concerns to which Tillich applies his principles of interpretation.

a. Revelation, mystery, and the ontological question.

What is revealed in revelation? Tillich replies:

> A revelation is a special and extraordinary manifestation which removes the veil from something which is hidden in a special and extraordinary way. This hiddenness is often called "mystery"....A genuine mystery, however, is experienced in an attitude which contradicts the attitude of ordinary cognition. The eyes are "closed" [the meaning of "mystery"] because the genuine mystery transcends the act of seeing, of confronting objects whose structures and relations present themselves to a subject for his knowledge. (1)

Thus when we begin to speak of our knowledge of revelation we are presented with certain difficulties. One basic reason for this is that our language has been formed to a considerable extent by the strict subject-object attitude toward experience; an attitude which is more or less appropriate to many aspects of experience, e.g., those with which technology is concerned. The resulting difficulty is one which we have frequently met in our discussion of history; and one which is intensified in theology.

In spite of this, however, assertions about the knowledge of revelation can and must be made. The first thing which needs to be said is "Whatever is essentially mysterious cannot lose its mysteriousness even when it is revealed."(2) This does not

(1) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, p.108.

(2) ibid., p.109.

mean, as it might seem to, that we know no more after revelation than before. Rather it is that revelation of that which is essentially and necessarily mysterious is the manifestation within the context of ordinary experience of something which transcends the context.

> Something more is known of the mystery after it has become manifest in revelation. First, its reality has become a matter of experience. Second, our relation to it has become a matter of experience. Both of these are cognitive elements. But revelation does not dissolve the mystery into knowledge. Nor does it add anything directly to the totality of our ordinary knowledge, namely, to our knowledge about the subject-object structure of reality.(1)

The statement in the last sentence is very important. It means that knowledge of revelation is not "controlling knowledge", that it cannot interfere with the integrity of other forms of knowledge, e.g., it cannot be used to formulate a Christian "philosophy of history".

Genuine mystery, in contrast to all false mysteries, appears when reason is driven beyond itself "to its 'ground and abyss,' to that which precedes reason, to the fact that 'being is and non-being is not'...to the original fact (Ur-Tatsache) that there is something and not nothing."(2)

The negative side of this is the shock of recognizing the threat of non-being; the threat of the "abyss".

(1) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, p.109.

(2) Ibid., p.110. Italics Tillich's.

> The question of being is produced by the "shock of nonbeing!". Only man can ask the ontological question because he alone is able to look beyond the limits of his own being and of every other being. Looked at from the standpoint of possible nonbeing, being is a mystery. Man is able to take this standpoint because he is free to transcend every given reality... [In asking the question of being he must] ask a question about that which creates the mystery of being...(1)

There is a second and positive side to this mystery; and this positive side includes the negative side. This positive side becomes manifest in actual revelation in which the mystery appears as ground as well as abyss; it appears as the power of being conquering nonbeing. And because it has the power to conquer nonbeing, it is of ultimate concern to him who receives it; it is the ground of his being. This mystery which is the ground and abyss of being expresses itself in symbols and myths which point to the depth of reason and its mystery.(2)

This asking of the ontological question, the question of being, is a fundamental part of the "pre-understanding", on the basis of which we are able to receive revelation. (Bultmann says this explicitly, but in different words.) This is not to say that revelation is derived from the ontological question; nor is the mystery to be equated with this question. Rather it is the basis upon which the mystery or the revelation of mystery

(1) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, p. 186.

(2) Throughout this exposition "mystery" should never be confused with esoteric knowledge about hidden things and happenings, or the knowledge of the past and the future.

is received. Another way of expressing this would be to say that the asking of the ontological question is a fundamental part of being human or of being in the image of God; and that the process of revelation assumes this humanity as one of the constituent factors, i.e., there is no revelation to the non-human. The revelation of mystery which is received in this process of revelation (and as we have said, it is impossible to conceive a "time" when there was no revelation) then becomes itself a part of that which makes up "pre-understanding".

In historical "pre-understanding" there is at least an analogy with theological "pre-understanding". We have discussed this at length saying that history could not be understood without such a "pre-understanding", that history proceeds on the basis of history. In other words, historical inquiry necessarily assumes previous historical experience, just as revelation necessarily assumes revelation.

Less obviously and more problematically: There is more than an analogy here; there is a direct parallel to this extent, that the historian is <u>implicitly</u> asking the ontological question. For example: Why is there form and not chaos, causality and not blind chance, rational order and not irrationality and so on? Moreover the historian is in the course of his historical work implicitly describing the character of form, causality, rational order etc. in history. These are variants of the ontological

question, and if they were not assumed by the historian, historical inquiry would no more be possible than theology would be without its more direct taking up of the ontological question.

b. Revelation and receiving groups:

The presupposition of revelation is, first, the asking of the ontological question and, secondly, previous revelation. These two together (and in theology, as in historical inquiry, their separation is an artificial situation) go to make up the "pre-understanding" which we bring to revelation; or, that which must be pre-supposed if revelation is to be received. That which is revealed and received is knowledge about the creator of the mystery of being; a matter of ultimate concern since it determines our own being or nonbeing.

The next question to be taken up is: In what situation can there be a revelation of this mystery? Tillich's answer is that the mystery is revealed for someone or some group in a concrete situation of concern. It must be a concrete historical situation; i.e., for the reasons we have already explained it cannot take place where there is an attitude of "asceticism to the Kairos." Moreover it must be a situation of concern, for only out of such a situation will there arise the question and the openness into which the revelation may enter as answer and fulfillment. Tillich elaborates this, saying:

> Revelation grasps an individual or a group, usually a group through an individual(1); it has revealing power only in this correlation. Revelations received outside the concrete situation can be apprehended only as reports about revelations which other groups assert that they have received [chronicle]. The knowledge of such reports, and even a keen understanding of them [philology], does not make them revelatory for anyone who does not belong to the group which is grasped by the revelation. (2)

This is a functional description of one aspect of the part played by receiving individuals or groups in the revelatory process. It is applicable to Judaism or Christianity, and to some extent to certain other religions. It is also applicable on this functional level to the writing of history in that significant history is written from a concrete situation of concern; concern for knowing the truth in the particular historical problem under consideration; concern (however unrecognized) for answering the modified form of the ontological question as that enters into the particular historical problem being studied. Certainly this concrete situation of concern is evident in Vico, Croce and Collingwood. At times it can readily be characterized as passionate, e.g., most obviously in their rejection of false history. Many other historians could be cited who clearly write from a position of concrete concern; e.g., Gibbon, Spengler, Charles Beard etc.

(1) Of course the individual is a "product" of the group, and could not have his particular existence apart from the group. For example Moses and Paul were outstanding individuals, but they cannot be conceived of apart from the Hebrew people.

(2) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, p.111

The functional description of the part of receiving individuals and groups in the revelatory process also has a second important application to, or parallel with, the writing of history. This lies in the fact that the arrival at historical understanding comes about through the necessary interdependence of outstanding individuals and the group associated with them. For example, Gibbon, Spengler and Charles Beard, and their interpretations of history, are inconceivable apart from the societies which gave rise to them. They are obviously dependent upon their respective societies for their approach to history. At the same time they were (whatever their faults) outstanding individuals with unusual insight into various historical situations; and in varying degrees and ways they gave to their societies a new understanding of their situation.

This is not to obscure the differences between theology and history, the basic character of which we have described in a previous section.(1) But it is to assert that on a <u>functional level</u> receiving individuals and groups play the same role in history and in the receiving of revelation.

c. Revelation and ecstasy.

Tillich is fully aware of the danger of misunderstanding in the use of the word "ecstasy", but its use is necessary as there is none other to describe the reality to which it points.

(1) see <u>supra</u>, pp.334ff.

It is necessary to warn against the confusion of this term with "enthusiasm" and similar states of mind artificially and self-conpciously induced by cultic practice. It is also to be distinguished from the idea of "inspiration" in its various forms, e.g., nonreflective acts of cognition, being in a creative mood, mechanically conceived doctrines of the inspiration of Scripture etc. Positively,

> "Ecstasy" ("standing outside one's self") points to a state of mind which is extraordinary in the sense that the mind transcends...its subject-object structure. In being beyond itself [i.e., beyond the subject-object structure] reason does not deny itself. "Ecstatic reason" remains reason; it does not receive anything irrational or antirational——which it could not do without self-destruction——but it transcends the basic condition of finite rationality, the subject-object structure. (1)

Ecstasy occurs only if the mind is grasped by the mystery of the ground of being and meaning. The condition of ecstasy is that in which that which concerns us unconditionally manifests itself. The unconditional appears in conjunction with ecstasy, but it cannot be derived from ecstasy.

We have spoken of the "shock of nonbeing" which is correlated with the ontological question. In revelation and ecstatic experience the ontological shock is preserved and overcome at the same time.

> It is preserved in the annihilating power of the divine presence (<u>mysterium tremendum</u>) and is overcome in the elevating power of the divine presence (<u>mysterium fascinosum</u>). Ecstasy unites the experience

(1) Tillich, Paul, <u>Systematic Theology</u>, I, pp.111-112.

> of the abyss to which reason in all its functions is driven with the experience of the ground in which reason is grasped by the mystery of its own depth and of the depth of being generally. (1)

Once more it is well to warn that this does not mean that reason is destroyed; nor does it mean that reason is invaded by a strange body of knowledge with which it cannot unite. The prevalence of this distortion of ecstasy and revelation should not blind us to its character, namely, one of demonic and destructive supernaturalism.

It may be helpful to apply this description of ecstasy to a familiar record of an ecstatic experience, namely that of Paul on the Damascus road. First of all it would exclude any simple identification of what happened with excitement, enthusiasm or similar psychological states. Secondly, it would exclude any interpretation of the external circumstances, such as the light and the heavenly voice, as having happened in any literal or subject-object sense——if you will, in any way which would have been photographable. Thirdly, it would assume the necessity on the part of Paul of having a "pre-understanding" as to the necessity of a Christ, of having received previous revelation (from the Jewish church), and of having undergone a process of questioning as to whether or not Jesus is the Christ. Fourthly, it would interpret the experience as having both the marks of nonbeing (the guilt, the blindness) and of nonbeing overcome

(1) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, p. 113.

(the conversion itself). Fifthly, according to Tillich's description of ecstasy, we cannot say that Paul received any knowledge that was anti- or non-rational; nor anything that invaded his mind as a "strange body", nor anything which he could not be united with his reason. Sixthly, that which Paul received would have to be of ultimate concern to him, namely that Jesus the Christ was his (Paul's) Christ.

There is still a seventh, final and crucial characteristic of Paul's experience. It is not only that Paul's experience had the element of fate and freedom in it, i.e., the fateful involvement of Paul with Jesus as the Christ, and the using of the freedom to decide in order to decide that Jesus is the Christ. This occurs in <u>any</u> genuine act of historical decision-interpretation. But more is involved here in Paul's experience because, in contrast to a straightforward historical decision, Paul's decision that Jesus is the Christ does not proceed directly from the formal evidence. The decision does not contradict the formal evidence (e.g., evidence pertaining to Jesus' life), but it does not proceed directly from it. This is because, as is never the case in ordinary history, the formal evidence has a transcendent reference, a transcendent reference shown to us through the operation of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit directed decision that Jesus is the Christ is made through or on the basis of the formal historical evidence, but it does not proceed simply or straightforwardly from that evidence.

d. Revelation and miracle.

If the subjective side of revelation is ecstasy, the objective side is miracle. In the term "miracle" we have an even more thoroughly debased word than "ecstasy". It has taken on the anti-rational definition of "a happening which contradicts [interfers with] the laws of nature"; and a typical rationlist theory of miracle has been elaborated to the effect: "the more impossible, the more revelatory!" This is a demonic theory of miracles because it reveals a "structure of destruction".(1)

In an effort to correct this situation Tillich suggests the use of the New Testament word semeion, rendering it as "sign-event", to express the giving ("objective") side of the revelatory event. Further, just as "the ecstasy in which the mystery is received does not destroy the rational structure of the mind by which it is received", so "the sign-event which gives the mystery of revelation does not destroy the rational structure of the reality in which it appears".

There is an additional parallel between ecstasy and miracle. As we have discussed, ecstasy presupposes the shock of nonbeing in the mind; so "sign-events presuppose the stigma of nonbeing in the reality." This stigma is the negative side of the mystery which appears. In the sign-event the stigma of finitude

(1) Cf. Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, pp.115ff.

(i.e., of implicit and inescapable nonbeing) which is implicitly present in things at all times becomes intensified and obvious.

> It is striking that in many miracle stories there is a description of the "numinous" dread which grasps those who participate in the miraculous events. There is the feeling that the solid ground of ordinary reality is taken "out from under" their feet. (1)

Familiar and outstanding examples of this are to be found in the account of Isaiah's vision (Isaiah 6) and the accounts of the Transfiguration.

With this background Tillich gives the three characteristics of genuine miracle. Miracle is first of all "an event which is astonishing, unusual, shaking, without contradicting the rational structure of reality". Secondly, it "points to the mystery of being, expressing its relation to us in a definite way." Thirdly, it is "an occurrence which is received as a sign-event in an ecstatic experience."(2)

When such a situation as this is present it constitutes a "special constellation of elements in reality" (miracle); which, together with "special constellation of elements of the mind", (ecstasy), forms a revelatory constellation. "One can say that ecstasy is the miracle of the mind and that miracle is the ecstasy of reality."(3) Only in this revelatory constellation does the mystery of being give itself to us.

(1) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, p.116.
(2) Cf. ibid., p.117.
(3) ibid., p.117.

Tillich's treatment of miracle is a superb piece of theological analysis; the most satisfactory to be found in contemporary theolgical literature. On the one hand it avoids destructive supernaturalism; on the other it is free of a rationalistic evaporation of the accounts of miracles. All revelation, it maintains, takes place <u>in</u> history (i.e., in the sense that it takes place in space and time); but also, and this is more important, revelation takes place <u>through</u> history i.e., as an integral or non-alien part of the ongoing course of history. But it does not take place through any and all history. Only those events of history which are part of a revelatory constellation (ecstasy and miracle) are the bearers of revelation.

e. Original and dependent revelation.

Tillich makes a distinction between the original revelatory events, and subsequent revelation which is dependent upon the original events. His development of this distinction is particularly interesting in view of our investigations in Part II.

> An original revelation is a revelation which occurs in a constellation which did not exist before. This miracle and this ecstasy are joined for the first time. Both sides are original...[as for example when] Peter encountered the man Jesus whom he called the Christ in an original revelatory ecstasy...(1)

(1) Tillich, Paul, <u>Systematic Theology</u>, I, p. 126.

This original miracle with its original reception is a permanent point of reference for the Church. But in addition to this there is a continuing revelation in the Church. This is dependent revelation, i.e., its "Spiritual reception by following generations".

This process is more complicated that it first appears. In the original revelation Peter, for example, receives Jesus as the Christ. Following generations receive as the Christ he who had been received as the Christ by Peter and the other apostles. Both sides of this correlation have now been changed. In the original revelation it is the man Jesus who is received. In the dependent revelation it is the man Jesus-as-received-by-the-apostles who is received as the Christ. Once again, in the original revelation it was Peter and the apostles who received Jesus as the Christ. In the dependent revelation it is I as a contemporary believer who receives the Christ. This change is not just a simple change of one man (I myself) for another (Peter). It is rather a significant change due to the fact that I am a member of a different generation "with new potentialities of reception". Thus when I take my place in the revelatory constellation, it is a different constellation. In terms of our foregoing discussion, I enter the revelatory constellation with a "pre-understanding" which is in some ways different from that of Peter.

The locus of these continuing revelations is the Church; the power which brings them to pass is the Holy Spirit. "A dependent revelatory situation exists in every moment in which the divine Spirit grasps, shakes, and moves the human spirit." Tillich uses the term "illumination" for this process, and describes it in the following way.

> The term "illumination" points to the cognitive element in the process of actualizing the New Being. It is the cognitive side of ecstasy... The divine Spirit, illuminating believers individually and as a group, brings their cognitive reason into revelatory correlation with the event on which Christianity is based. (1)

This understanding of original and dependent revelation radically excludes a nonexistential concept of revelation. Propositions about past revelation give theoretical information; they are the theological equivalent of "chronicle" or "philology" they have no revelatory power. Propositions and doctrines are not revealed. Rather it is that events take place which can be described propositionally or doctrinally after the theologian is in a revelatory constellation with these events.

If the understanding of revelation found in Tillich's work has parallels with the historical process of "re-enactment" and historical understanding, the parallels between historical understanding and dependent revelation is even more marked. Let us examine these parallels.

(1) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, p. 127.

In the above passage Tillich speaks of "the process of actualizing the New Being" which takes place through the power of the divine Spirit. The concept of the "New Being" runs throughout his work. Some indication of its nature is given in the following passages from one of his sermons.

> If I were asked to sum up the Christian message for our time in two words, I would say with Paul: It is the message of a "New Creation"...Christianity is the message of the New Creation, the New Being, the New Reality which has appeared with the appearance of Jesus who for this reason, and just for this reason, is called the Christ.
>
> Where one is grasped by a human face as human, although one has to overcome personal distaste, or racial strangeness...and all the other innumerable causes of separation——there New Creation happens!
>
> Reconciliation, reunion, resurrection——this is the New Creation, the New Being...(The New Being, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1955, from the sermon "The New Being". Italics Tillich's.)

Now the "actualization of the New Being" is for me a dependent revelation. If I am to actualize the New Being in my life, then I must enter a revelatory constellation (as described in our previous discussion) with the event upon which Christianity and the New Being are based——with Jesus as the Christ.(1) To do this means to forsake dependence upon all static, propositional descriptions of this event, as well as the so-called "historical proofs" of its validity and power. In short it means

(1) This is not to be interpreted as meaning that this can be done at will.

to forsake a strict subject-object approach and to enter into union or relationship with the event itself.

But what does it mean to enter into union with the event itself? It does not mean primarily to enter into union with the biographical, political, psychological etc. aspects of the life of Jesus the Christ, as one might with the life of Caesar or Luther. We cannot do this because we have very little information about these matters; and if we did, it would do little if anything to help us to recognize Jesus as the bearer of the New Being. What we do know of Jesus is the New Being which appeared and appears in him. This is the primary aspect of Christ which is described in the New Testament, and this is so because it was in this that the authors were primarily interested.

Now we are enabled to enter the "revelatory constellation" with Jesus as the Christ when the divine Spirit or Holy Spirit "grasps, shakes and moves the human spirit". The description of the way in which the Holy Spirit does this is frequently handled in an intolerable way; usually being a conspiracy of silence, with the implication that the Holy Spirit works as a "strange body" moving into the situation. But certainly if revelation takes place <u>through</u> history and in no other way, then the Holy Spirit works <u>through</u> history and in no other way. In neither case is there any "asceticism to the Kairos". This means, specifically, that the Holy Spirit is at work in the "pre-understanding" and questioning which we bring into the revelatory

constellation, as well as in the rational structure itself (the logos) of our minds. The Spirit also uses the actions of our fellowmen which drive us to see man's need, as well as the acts and words of the Church which witness to God's answer to man's need. It is in such, so to speak, "mundane ways" as these that the Holy Spirit operates. But the result of the operation of the Holy Spirit is not mundane but ecstatic. Through it we enter into an ecstatic revelatory constellation with Jesus the Christ; and out of this the New Being appears, the marks of which are reconciliation, reunion and resurrection.

If we were to abstract from the revelatory process such factors as "pre-understanding", we would then be able to say that there is a complete similarity between the process of historical understanding and the process whereby we arrive at knowledge of revelation. However, if we look at the two processes as a whole we see that there is both a similarity and a difference between them. In both cases it is through "pre-understanding", questioning, involvement in a receiving community and so on that we are enabled to "re-enact" and thus meaningfully apprehend specific concrete events which have taken place in space and time. This is the similarity. The difference lies in that while the Spirit——the Spirit of truth——is at work in historical inquiry, He is not at work in such a way that it leads to the actualization of the New Being. In the apprehension of revelation, on the other hand, these same factors of "pre-understanding", questioning, involvement in a receiving community

and so on are used by the Holy Spirit to enable us to respond to the Word of God, to recreate the New Being. We receive it and enter into union with it; we are grasped by it.(1) In this way the New Being is actualized.

4. Tillich's Corrective to Christian Doctrine.

Tillich's corrective to Christian doctrine has two aspects. The first lies in criticising and rejecting various general approaches to the formulation of Christian doctrine, e.g., his criticism of supranaturalism and strict subject-object formulations of revelation. We have already dealt with this aspect at length. The other aspect of his corrective efforts lies in trying to formulate a new terminology for certain debased theological terminology, e.g., "sign-event" for "miracle".(2) These two efforts are closely related of course.

Of the various correctives which Tillich offers to Christian doctrine, we will discuss only those which are closely related to our particular interest, i.e., history and hermeneutics. It is in this area, in fact, that the most fundamental of

(1) Being "grasped" never takes place in conjunction with controlling knowledge, but only in conjunction with receiving knowledge, e.g., as when we speak of being "grasped" by the power of a strong personality.

(2) To try to formulate a new terminology is always to invite criticism. This is because theological terminology tends idoatrously to claim for itself the ultimate concern which properly belongs only to its subject. Of this Tillich says: "But I cannot accept criticism as valuable which merely insinuates that I have surrendered the substance of the Christian message because I have used a terminology which consciously deviates from the biblical or ecclesiastical language". Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, II, viii.

Tillich's correctives lie. It should be evident in what follows that Tillich's effort here flows directly out of the understanding of history, hermeneutics and revelation which we have just discussed.

a. Miracle.

Tillich's excellent treatment of miracle belongs naturally in the group of doctrines to be discussed in this section. However it has been necessary to treat this subject in the previous exposition of Tillich's thought, and the reader is referred to that section ("Revelation and miracle"). In summary of that section we may say that miracle is to be understood as an ecstatically received understanding of a contellations of factors which point to the Ground of Being.

b. Myth

Myth and cult "represent the depth of reason in symbolic form". This definition utilizes one of Tillich's peculiar concepts, the "depth of reason", which he explains in the following way.

> The depth of reason is the expression of something that is not reason but which proceeds reason and is manifest through it. Reason in both its objective and its subjective structures points to something which appears in these structures but which transcends them in power and meaning. This is not another field of reason which could progressively be discovered and expressed, but it is that which is expressed through every rational expression. [Metaphorically] it could be called the "substance"

> which appears in the rational structure...[or] the "ground" which is creative in every rational creation, [or] the "abyss" which cannot be exhausted by any creation or by any totality of them...(1)

Only these metaphorical descriptions are possible of the depth of reason, even though that depth is an essential quality of all rational functions. However, such metaphors may be applied in the various fields in which reason is actualized. In the cognitive realm the depth of reason has the quality of pointing through the relative truths to "truth-itself"; in the aesthetic realm the depth of reason has the quality of pointing through the specific creations to "beauty-itself"; and in the communal realm the depth of reason has the power of pointing through the forms of actualized love to "love-itself".

On this suggestive but difficult basis Tillich proceeds to his analysis of myth; an analysis which is both satisfactory and useful even though we may not be entirely content with the concept of the "depth of reason" or "essential reason".

> The depth of reason is essentially manifest in reason. But it is hidden in reason under the conditions of existence. Because of these conditions reason in existence expresses itself in myth and cult as well as in its proper functions...[myth and cult] are utterly ambiguous from the point of view of existential reason. Innumerable theories defining them, explaining them, and explaining them away are a token of this situation.(2)

(1) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, p.79.

(2) ibid. p.80.

Tillich then takes this understanding of myth and contrasts it with another understanding which is prevalent in various modifications. He points out that myth is either the expression of the depth of reason in symbolic form, the position which he maintains, or it is a special realm of reason alongside of other realms. If it is the latter, then there is a never ending and insoluble conflict between myth and the other realms of reason in which myth is either swallowed by reason, or "placed into the category of irrational feelings, or maintained as strange bodies, heteronomous and destructive, within the structure of reason." But, speaking again of his own point of view, Tillich writes:-

> If, however, myth and cult are considered to be the expressions of the depth of reason in symbolic form, they lie in a dimension where no interference with the proper functions of reason is possible. Wherever the ontological concept of reason is accepted and the depth of reason is understood no conflicts between myth and knowledge, between cult and morals are necessary. (1) (2)

In general terms myth "represents the depth of reason in symbolic form". However, in the New Testament that to which

(1) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, p.81.

(2) In another context Tillich offers the following reflection upon myth which touches suggestively upon several of the concerns running through this whole investigation: "The unity of reason is disrupted by its division into departments each of which is controlled by a special set of structural forms...The cognitive function, deprived of its aesthetic element, is separated from the aesthetic function, deprived of its cognitive element. In essential reason these two elements are united in various degrees, as reflected in functions like historical and ontological intuition...The union of the cognitive and aesthetic functions is fully expressed in mythology, the womb out of which both of them were born...and to which they tend to return." Systematic Theology, I, p.91.

myth refers becomes more specific, and it becomes concrete. It becomes specific and concrete in that myth and symbol are used in the New Testament to refer to and to express the universal meaning of one specific man, Jesus as the Christ.(1) And in this man we have received as the basis of the Christian faith that which is completely concrete. "No myth, no mystical vision, no metaphysical principle, no sacred law has the concreteness of a personal life." But at the same time the event of Jesus as the Christ is absolutely universal, for in comparison with the Logos everything else is relatively particular. So it is that that which is absolutely concrete is also absolutely universal. The Logos has become flesh. Christian theology is in the tension between these two sides, and the description of the concrete event and its universal significance must draw upon myth and symbol.

A consequence of this is that there can be no complete demythologization. Alluding to the Bultmann controversy, Tillich writes:

> "Demythologization" can mean two things, and the failure to distinguish between them has led to the confusion which characterizes the discussion. It can mean the fight against the literalistic distortion of symbols and myths. This is a necessary task of Christian theology. It keeps Christianity from falling into a wave of superstious "objectivations" of the holy. But demythologization can also mean the removal of myth as

(1) Cf. Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, II, p.152.

> a vehicle of religious expression and the substitution of science and morals. In this sense demythologization must be strongly rejected. It would deprive religion of its language...(1)

This gives an indication of Tillich's approach to myth. It is of a piece with his total hermeneutical position as discussed in the preceding sections of this chapter. The implications and fruitfulness of this understanding can be discovered only by following a detailed application of it to a specific myth, as for example the long discussion of the Fall in volume II of the Systematic Theology (pp. 29-45).

Finally we should note Tillich's remarks about myth in relation to the writing of history.

> Mythical means symbolical of the eternal. To view an historical figure mythically means to regard it as the expression of a meaning which is rooted in the depth of the eternal; it means in the last analysis to regard it religiously...Great creative writing of history will always be marked by mythologizing tendencies, whether or not it desires them.(2)

Elsewhere he writes in the same vein:

(1) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, II, p.152. Whether or not Bultmann himself is guilty of this complete demythologization is very much an open question. Tillich does not venture an opinion in the matter. The question cannot be decided on the basis of short quotations, but in fairness to Bultmann the following statement of his should be given here. "His method of interpretation of the New Testament which tries to recover the deeper meaning behind the mythological conceptions I call de-mythologizing - an unsatisfactory word, to be sure. Its aim is not to eliminate the mythological statements but to interpret them." Jesus Christ and Mythology, SCM Press, London, 1960, p.18. Italics / Bultmann's.

(2) Tillich, Paul, The Religious Situation, Meridian Books, New York, 1956, p.68.

> Mythical thinking realizes that ultimate importance can be claimed only by that event in which the absolute is supposed to appear in time. This principle is valid, however, for all historical writing, even the unmythical; or rather: All historical writing which is to be taken seriously must have in it this mythical element by means of which it is raised above a mere description of successive stages of finiteness.(1)

Tillich envisages this as taking place not in the mythological symbols of the past, but in symbols which in all of their rationality contain an indication of the transcendence of history. Every historical event can become a symbol of this.

Is this "philosophy of history"? It certainly looks like it, and we will consider this question in the next section, in which we look again at Tillich's view of Kairos and Logos. However, at this point it should be stated (we will give evidence of this later) that Tillich is aware of the destructive heteronomy of the "philosophy of history". It should also be stated that if this is "philosophy of history", then it is a subtle form of that practice. For example he writes:

> This character [of the mythical aspect in history], of course, lies in its depth; it cannot become a principle of presentation. It cannot be brought to the surface of historical reports...The real observation of history has to do with the phenomena which are perceptible but in which the depth can manifest itself...(2)

The distinction between "philosophy of history" as practiced by someone such as Toynbee, and the view presented here is

(1) Tillich, Paul, The Interpretation of History, p. 96.

(2) Ibid., p.98.

obvious. Toynbee attempts to derive his theories right out of the historical facts; the theories become a "principle of presentation". It is for indulging in just this, as we saw in Part II, that historians such as Geyl criticize Toynbee. We will discuss this whole matter more fully in the next main section of this chapter.

c. Eschatology.

In the course of a discussion of contemporary and largely non-christian eschatological movements, e.g., that of Nietzsche, Tillich states the antithesis of eschatological thinking. It is the attitude of "self-sufficient finitude".

> For the spirit of self-sufficient finitude there is no such thing as an end in the definite sense of the term, since the end means the real catastrophe of all finitude which is sufficient to itself. (1)

The "end" is an expression of what self-sufficient finitude consciously or, more often, unconsciously denies; namely, "the essential relationship between time and eternity."

Yet, in spite of the opposition of eschatology to this attitude of self-sufficient finitude, it is not concerned strictly with a realm which is outside of time and finitude; it does not practice an "asceticism to the Kairos". Eschatology is concerned with the "end", the ultimate; but by this it is not meant

(1) Tillich, Paul, The Religious Situation, p.174.

> ...that the ultimate is a state of existence which brings the end of time. A concept of an end of time, in a temporal sense, cannot be maintained. It would not be an end, but a discontinuance. The thought of a discontinuance of time, however, is itself a time-determined thought, and therefore contradicts itself. The end of historical time is [rather] its relation to the ultimate. (1)

In other words all eschatological concepts must have a double reference; on the one hand a reference to history and time; and, on the other hand, to the ultimate or the eternal. If eschatological concepts are deprived of their relationship to history and time, then they come to represent an independent sphere of objects and events. When this happens we have the same impossible situation which we described in dealing with the supranaturalistic theory of miracles, i.e., the fracturing of knowledge into separate and foreign realms, the relegation of eschatology by reason into an emotive realm, and the heteronomous imposition of eschatological concepts upon reason in the name of religion.

Thus eschatology, truly understood, is neither self-sufficient finitude nor supranaturalism. Rather, it is an expression of the relation between the finite and the eternal; of "the transcendent meaning implied in history."(2)

There are two concepts, Tillich continues, which define more exactly what we mean by the "ultimate". It will be seen

(1) Tillich, Paul, The Interpretation of History, p.280.

(2) Cf. ibid. p.270.

that these two concepts are not foreign to history, but that they are expressions of the transcendent meaning in history. The first of these concepts is "fulfillment"

> Fulfillment here means that the meaning of history has overcome ambiguity and meaninglessness. The ultimate, therefore, is the transcendent fulfillment, the unconditionally fulfilled. Conditioned fulfillment is menaced by the threat of meaninglessness, by the threat that history will end negatively...Eschatology is the theoretical expression of the Christian belief that in every historical event in past and future there is a relationship to an ultimate fulfillment, which lends meaning to relative and conditioned fulfillment. (1)

It is in the light of this that the eschatological concept of the Kingdom of God is to be understood. "The Kingdom of God is the fulfillment intended in history and implied in the ultimate. The Kingdom of God is the transcendent fulfillment, the name for the ultimate from the point of view of fulfillment.. [and] embraces everything in the course of history as its transcendent meaning."(2)

The second concept is that of "decision".

> History since it depends upon freedom, implies decision. But every historical decision remains ambiguous. It is always decision for and against meaning at the same time. Therefore the ultimate, being fulfillment, must be decision at the same time, definite, unambiguous, unconditioned decision. The ultimate, from this point of view, is that which is decided, and consequently is not subject to a new decision as is everything in history. So we must say that the ultimate is the unconditioned decision

(1) Tillich, Paul, The Interpretation of History, p.278.

(2) ibid., p.280.

> intended in every ambiguous decision in history and the unconditioned fulfillment intended in every ambiguous fulfillment in history. (1)

The eschatological symbol associated with the concept of decision is the "Last Judgment"; it is the transcendental meaning of every historical decision. And in this connection Tillich cites the emphasis of the Gospel of John "that the judgment is going on in history, wherever the 'light' becomes visible and is accepted or rejected."(2) (3)

Thus the two qualities of the ultimate, fulfillment and decision, belong together. There is no fulfillment in history without decision, since freedom of decision is a presupposition of history; and there is no decision in which fulfillment is not affirmed or denied, since meaning is the content of free decisions.

But not only do fulfillment and decision belong together; for, let us emphasize again, the ultimate and history also belong together. Eschatology, far from being a flight from concreteness and history, is the most radical affirmation of them that is possible.

(1) Tillich, Paul, The Interpretation of History, p.279.

(2) This position obviously has similarities with Bultmann's regarding eschatology. However Tillich's position, in its total context, possibly retains a stronger sense of the transcendent in that which is "realized".

(3) Cf. Systematic Theology II, p. 162, where this position is restated and also applied to the "Second Coming".

> Through this consideration i.e., the whole preceding argument , human activity received absolute weight; history, absolute meaning.
>
> History in its relationship to transcendent fulfillment and decision receives absolute seriousness. It is not the realm where man acts without relationship to God. There is no such realm. History is the realm where the ultimate is intended. There is nothing in the ultimate that is not in history. In the ultimate there is no fulfillment that is not intended in history. In the ultimate there is no decision that is not prepared in history. (1) (2)

This concludes our treatment of Tillich's understanding of eschatology. It obviously raises the question as to whether or not Tillich is guilty of engaging in the "philosophy of history" as that term has been understood in our examination of Vico, Croce and Collingwood. However, the stage will not be fully set to discuss this charge until we have seen what Tillich has to say about Kairos and Logos, and their relationship. We turn to this now.

5. Tillich's Corrective to the Christian Understanding of History: Kairos and Logos.

Tillich looks upon his conception of the Kairos as being "...a summons to a thinking that is conscious of history...,an interpretation of the meaning of history on the basis of the

(1) Tillich, Paul, The Interpretation of History, pp. 279-280. Italics mine.

(2) Cf. Tillich's understanding of the Kairos in the following section.

conception of Kairos, a demand for a consciousness of the present and for action in the present..."[1] Earlier in this chapter it was necessary to touch upon this conception of the Kairos and its relation to the Logos; now we must develop and explore these concepts and their relationship. In this exploration we are, unfortunately, handicapped due to the fact that the part of the Systematic Theology dealing with these concepts in their relation to history has not yet appeared.[2]

Kairos is not to be confused with its antithesis, chronos. Chronos is "formal time", and appropriate to abstract, objective thinking, e.g., chronicle and natural science. It is also appropriate to the mystical unawareness of history. Here mysticism and natural science are united!

Kairos itself is "the right time" or "fulfilled time".[3] For Aristotle kairos had a more limited meaning, being "the good in the category of time". That is to say, according to Aristotle "if a special moment of time is good for the fulfillment of something, this moment is its, kairos...But time as such has no

(1) Tillich, Paul, The Protestant Era, Nisbet and Co., London, 1951, pp.37-38.

(2) It is outside the scope of this exploration to enter into Tillich's exciting and important application of these concepts to contemporary social and political movements. For this application see the essay "Kairos" in The Protestant Era, and The Religious Situation.

(3) "The point of all this is, Joey, that it was you who taught me how to tell tea time from historical time and sidereal time and space-time as well as all of the other no account times." Miller, Henry, The Intimate Henry Miller, The New American Library, New York, 1959, p.133.

kairos...because the world process as a whole has no good and no perfection. The ultimate good is above it, not in it, and does not appear in any special moment."(1)

In contrast to this, Tillich continues, St. Paul's conception of kairos has undergone a profound change.

> In Paul, kairos designates the fulfillment of time as a whole. The good in the category of time appears fully in one moment of time, dividing history into a period of preparation and of reception, creating a centre of history, cutting off the two infinities of physical time, ...thus establishing a "definitive" time.(2)

Tillich takes the concept of kairos and uses it in two ways. First, in the unique and more ordinary sense in which it designates the time of appearance of Jesus as the Christ; and secondly, in a general and special sense in which it designates "every turning point in history in which the eternal judges and transforms the temporal." Both of these meanings are included in Tillich's use of the term Kairos.

The second concept of the pair of concepts being discussed in this section is that of the logos. This is a more familiar term, and hence calls for less discussion. The logos is "the universal reason in world and mind"(3); it is universal and abstract in contrast to the kairos which is particular and con-

(1) Tillich, Paul, The Protestant Era, p.51. Italics Tillich's.
(2) ibid., p.51.
(3) ibid., p.52.

crete; in contrast to "technical reason" which is preoccupied with the means, the logos is first of all concerned with determining the ends of an inquiry, and only in the second place with the means.(1) The logos is the word which grasps and shapes reality, and it can do this only because reality has a logos character.(2) Tillich takes this concept of the logos and uses it in two ways. First, in a general and ordinary sense as we have defined it above; and secondly, in the unique and special sense in which it designates the Logos who became flesh, Jesus as the Christ. Both of these meanings are included in Tillich's use of the term Logos. The significance of Tillich's use of the concepts Kairos and Logos will become clearer as our discussion proceeds; including the general and unique usage of each, and their relationship to one another.

In an address entitled "Philosophy and Fate", and originally given in 1929 upon assuming the chair of Professor of Philosophy at the University of Frankfurt, Tillich develops the relationship between these two concepts in the following way.

> ...ideas are not static possibilities but dynamic forces whose eternity does not prevent them from becoming temporal, whose essence drives them to appear in existence. In this, Aristotle and Hegel are right, against Plato and Descartes. (3)

(1) Cf. Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, p.73.

(2) Cf. ibid. p.75.

(3) Tillich, Paul, The Protestant Era, p.14.

This is a statement of the basic relationship between idea (logos) and fate (kairos). We should not be put off by phrases in the earlier work of Tillich in which there is a personification of abstract ideas, e.g., as in the passage above where he speaks of ideas "whose eternity does not prevent them from becoming temporal".(1) What Tillich means, as was indicated above in the section "Knowledge and historical event", and as will become clearer in what follows, is that it is only through the apprehension of historical events that we are enabled to have knowledge of anything, including knowledge of the logos. This is a better way of expressing the matter than speaking in terms of such metaphors as an "essence" which "drives".

Now this relationship of idea (truth) and historical event is the theme which has appeared in our investigation from the beginning; our first encounter with it being Vico's principle that to know anything (i.e., to know the logos) is to know its origin (its historical fate, its coming into being, its kairos). We saw this same theme in a more developed form in Croce's "history of Spirit" in which Spirit realizes itself through concrete historical (fateful) manifestations——a painting, a system of morals, a theory of government etc. And finally, we have examined this same theme as it appears in Collingwood and Bultmann.

(1) In an autobiographical sketch Tillich has admitted a tendency to love abstract ideas for their own sake; a tendency which several decades in America has helped to correct.

Tillich goes on to enlarge upon this point of view. He maintains that fate is not strange to truth, but an integral part of it. While we may posit that in an abstract way the logos which is discovered in historical events has some independent existence "above" fate, yet if we do this we must understand that

> ...this eternal truth, this logos above fate, is not at man's disposal; it cannot be subjected, as Hegel thought it could, to the processes of human thinking; it cannot be described or presented as the meaningful world process... [it] is not our possession...[it is not] an idea with whose help a philosophy free from fate can be created. (1)

This is an indication that Tillich is not engaged in the "philosophy of history"; at least not in the sense we have been using that term. There is no pattern of ideas, no process which stands above history and can be imposed upon history, i.e., "presented as the meaningful world process". There is no "ideal and eternal history".

Now if this is the case, if truth or the idea is necessarily conjoined with its historical fate, then there is an element of venture and risk in every statement of truth. The unavoidable ambiguity of historical events (which are never "clear and distinct ideas") enters into the statement of truth. Yet we must take this risk because this is the only way in which truth can reveal itself to finite and historical beings.

(1) Tillich, Paul, The Protestant Era, p.15.

> The logos is to be taken up into the kairos, universal values into the fulness of time, truth into the fate of existence. The separation of idea and existence has to be brought to an end. It is the very nature of essence to come into existence, to enter into time and fate.(1)

We should pause here a moment to call attention to the fact that this understanding of kairos and logos is supported by, and itself supports, the hermeneutic principles discussed at length in the first part of this chapter. For example, it should be clear that receiving as well as controlling knowledge must be utilized in this approach to truth, that "pre-understanding" and "re-enactment" is a part of any approach to knowledge which sees knowledge conjoined to historical event (fate), that freedom and decision must be a part of such knowledge and so on.

Tillich relates this understanding of knowledge to the development of Western philosophy. He sees in this development two main lines (together with variations and combinations of these two which need not detain us here). The first line is characterized by methodical self-consciousness and a predominantly Greek view of nature and the world. Its classical formulation is Descartes' A Discourse on Method. This line is the dominant one, and has enjoyed overwhelming success in creating a technical science and society in which controlling knowledge is predominant over receiving knowledge. In this line of development

(1) Tillich, Paul, The Protestant Era, pp.15-16. Cf. Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, pp.254ff.

"time remains insignificant in [a] static type of thinking in terms of form [i.e., of the *logos*], and even history presents only the unfolding of the possibilities and laws of the Gestalt "Man"..."[1] Plato, Kant, Goethe, the English empiricists and the 19th Century positivists are representatives of this first line of philosophical development; a development in which *logos* prevails over *kairos*.

The second line of development has not been methodically connected with rational science, for it created no scientific method and could not be subjected to experiment. Metaphysical in its innermost nature, its development was erratic and its breadth was small. Its attitude was an intrinsic (and unsuccessful) resistance to the methodical main line. Nevertheless it has effected a deep spiritual and religious upheaval in Protestant Mysticism, the later Romanticism and reaction, pessimism, and the spiritual and political revolution proceeding from Nietzsche. In this second line the world is to be understood as creation, conflict and fate. Time is not empty, not pure expiation or duration, but qualitatively fulfilled time.

> We call this fulfilled moment, the moment of time approaching us as fate and decision, *kairos*. In doing this we take up a word that was, to be sure, created by the Greek linguistic sense, but attained the deeper meaning of fulness of time, of decisive time, only in the thinking of early Christianity and its historical consciousness. The thinking in the Kairos, which is the determinant of the second

(1) Tillich, Paul, *The Interpretation of History*, pp.128-129.

> line explained in our historical consideration, is opposed to the thinking in the timeless Logos, which belongs to the methodical main line...the consideration of reality in the sense of the timeless Logos is at best an immense abstraction which cannot do justice to the passing fate and decision of immediate existence. (1)

Tillich characterizes these two lines of development in a way which we have examined before, but which it will be well to repeat briefly here. In this characterization he uses the word "asceticism" in the sense of "emptying" or "denying" or "avoidance"; and the word "Eros" in the sense of "filling" or "affirmation". The first line of Western philosophical development he describes as "asceticisms toward the Kairos, Eros toward the Logos". This is the attitude of pure theory and of regarding the world as a system of eternal forms. The second line he describes as "asceticism toward the Logos and Eros toward the Logos". Here knowledge is gained in terms of historical creation, conflict and ~~faith~~ fate.

The question which is then raised, and which we have discussed earlier, is: Is there any possible asceticism toward the Kairos? Or is such asceticism an abstraction? For a long time this question was not asked, and one saw "humanity as a

(1) Tillich, Paul, The Interpretation of History, p.129.

pupil marching in a straight line toward the knowledge of the eternal forms."

In answer to this question Tillich points out that, of course, there can be a limited asceticism toward the Kairos in science. There is

> ...the expedient abstention from the multiplicity of life for the purpose of concentrating the desire for knowledge. In this sense all successful action demands asceticism. (1)

But beyond this:

> ...there can be no asceticism toward the demand of the Kairos, no avoidance of the decision. Idealism and supernaturalism, inner-worldly and super-worldly establishment of an absolute position of the subject, are flights from decision. Asceticism is a flight from the decisions which continually have to be made in this distorted existence. (2)

There is no absolute position of the subject. This means we are

> ...to stand in nature, taking upon oneself the inevitable reality; not to flee from it, either into the world of idea forms or into the related world of super-nature, but to make decisions in concrete reality. Here the subject has no possibility of an absolute position. It cannot go out of the sphere of decision. Every part of its nature is affected by these contradictions. Fate and freedom reach into the act of knowledge and make it an historical deed: <u>the Kairos determines the Logos</u>.(3)

(1) Tillich, Paul, <u>The Interpretation of History</u>, p.135.

(2) <u>ibid.</u>, p.135.

(3) <u>ibid.</u>, pp. 134-135. Italics mine.

Knowledge is only possible through the decision of an individual in his particular historical situation; and this means that knowledge is involved in all of the ambiguities of the situation out of which it arises. In more technical language: "We...reject the definition of the relationship of essence [Logos] and existence [Kairos], which makes the essence unhistorical, without fate, and degrades existence in the scale of being and value in comparison with essence."(1) More concisely: Essence and fate are not strange to each other. Recognizing reality is recognizing reality as it stands in its historical fate, not beyond it. "The participation of the things in the idea corresponds just as seriously to the participation of the idea in the things. The Logos becomes flesh; it enters into time and reveals its inner infinity."(2)

The absolute position. At this point Tillich considers an objection to the argument which we have been presenting, and this consideration leads to a result which is important for his entire theology. The objection is as follows. If all knowledge is dependent upon a historically conditioned and consequently ambiguous decision, is it not the case therefore that the results of this theory of knowledge are themselves ambiguous? Or are we to make an

(1) Tillich, Paul, The Interpretation of History, pp.165-166.

(2) Ibid., p.164.

exception here? Yes, maintains Tillich, we are to make an exception for one principle, namely, "that our subjective thinking never can reach the unconditioned truth, that it must always remain in the realm of ambiguity."(1) If this exception is admitted, then for one bit of reality the ambiguous character of being is broken.

> Whatever stands in the context of knowledge is subject to the ambiguity of knowledge. Therefore such a proposition [i.e., the principle that our subjective thinking can never reach unconditioned truth] must be removed from the context of knowledge. It must arise from another sphere than that of knowledge. It must be the expression of the relation of knowledge to the Unconditioned and therefore the expression of a basic metaphysical attitude...The judgment that is removed from ambiguity, the judgment of absolute unequivocal truth, can be only the fundamental judgment about the relationship of the Unconditioned and the conditioned...The content of this judgment is just this——that our subjective thinking never can reach the unconditioned truth, that it must always remain in the realm of ambiguity. (2)

This is plainly an absolute judgment, nothing can escape it, it is the premise of all judging. This is the principle which guards and protects the Unconditioned, preventing an encroachment of a conditioned point of view upon the Unconditioned. However, this guarding principle (i.e., the denial of the possibility of an absolute position) is not <u>itself</u> the guarded, it is not <u>itself</u> the Unconditioned; and if it claims to be such, then it "abandons the watch and injures the holy". At other

(1) Tillich, Paul, <u>The Interpretation of History</u>, p.170.

(2) <u>ibid.</u>, p.170.

places Tillich refers to this guarding principle as the Protestant Principle; a principle which opposes every idolatrous attempt of the conditioned to lay claim to the Unconditioned.

But the absolute principle not only guards the Unconditional, it also points to it. The very existence of this guardian is an indication of that which it guards. All knowledge is relative (conditioned), but this fact points to that which is not relative--the Unconditioned.

> The doctrine of the guardian [pointing] character of the absolute position gives the concept of the Kairos its final fulfillment. A moment of time, event, deserves the name of Kairos, fullness of time in the precise sense, if it can be regarded in its relation to the Unconditioned, if it speaks of the Unconditioned... To look at a time thus, means to look at it in its truth. The truth of a time is its attitude toward the Unconditioned, by which it is supported and directed. Knowledge born in the situation of the Kairos then is not knowledge growing out of accidental arbitrary events of a period but out of the period's basic significance... True knowledge is not absolute knowledge. The guardian puts an end to this arrogance; on the contrary, true knowledge is knowledge born of the Kairos, that is, of the fate of the time, of the point at which time is disturbed by eternity. (1)

History and Christology. In the course of the discussion which we have just finished we used the expression of Tillich, "the Logos becomes flesh". It was used in its context to mean "the idea takes on historical embodiment". However it was clear that in his ideas of Logos and Kairos Tillich was laying the

(1) Tillich, Paul, The Interpretation of History, pp. 173-174.

basis for his Christology. We now turn explicitly to this relationship between history and Christology.

Tillich points out that the consideration of Jesus as the Christ leads to the question of history; and that the question of history leads to the Christological question. The first half of this statement is obvious. Christology is concerned with the reception and interpretation of an historical event; Jesus as the Christ. An interpretation of history is, if not consciously held, at least presupposed in this effort.

The second half of the statement is less obvious.

> Interpretation of history necessarily leads to the question of Christology. It is self-deception, when profane interpretation of history...considers itself capable of treating history without regarding the Christological question. Every historical reality, from which the meaning and rhythm of history are derived, lies within the scope of the Christological question. To develop Christology means to describe the concrete point [the Kairos in the unique sense] at which something absolute appears in history and provides it with meaning and purpose; and this indeed is the central problem of the philosophy of history.(1)

Tillich is saying that the existence and interpretation of the Kairos in the unique sense of Jesus as the Christ is the fundamental basis for the many secondary kairoi in which the eternal invades the temporal. This statement focuses the question as to whether or not this is "philosophy of history" in the sense we have used that term in Part II of this thesis.

(1) Tillich, Paul, The Interpretation of History, pp.242-243.

We will examine this charge shortly. At this point, however, our minds should at least be open to the possibility that Tillich has something valid to say here against Collingwood and especially Croce. Continuing the above quotation Tillich describes a process which takes place in varying ways and degrees in Vico, Croce and Collingwood.

> This problem [of meaning and purpose in history] can be obscured by leaving that concrete point in history unnamed or rendering it invisible by general abstract formulations. But the problem cannot be escaped, for history becomes history only through its relation to such a concrete point by which it gains meaning. (1)

This "meaning" which Tillich is speaking of is not a fact which is objectively ascertainable. It does not flow directly from the formal evidence. Nor can there be an abstract, non-historical decision about the meaning of history. In this last statement Tillich is in agreement with the historians whom we have examined: Meaning cannot arise in a non-historical realm and then be imposed upon the historical process; rather it must arise out of concrete historical event itself. This meaning-giving event must be one in which "the contraditions of meaning are regarded as overcome, in which the possibility of final senselessness is removed." Now it is here, Tillich says, that a decision of the Christological question has become part of the decision about history. This is so because Jesus as the Christ offers himself as a concrete event in history in which

(1) Tillich, Paul, The Interpretation of History, p.243.

the contradictions of existence are overcome.(1)

As we have said many times, history cannot be understood spatially, objectively, biologically etc. Thus "beginning" and "end" (being suited only to spatial, objective, biological thinking) are not determinative for history. Rather history is understood through the interpretation or meaning of a concrete historical event. The event out of which meaning arises Tillich calls "the centre of history". The centre or the meaning of history determines history's beginning (the genesis of the centre) and end (the fulfillment of the centre). (Croce, who is most clearly opposed to Tillich, would agree with this. However, Croce would make an important qualification. He would say that there is no one centre, but that each historically understood event is its own centre. Whether there is another, unadmitted and comprehensive centre in Croce's thinking is another question.)

The existence of a centre of history excludes other centres; it is determinative for all of history. There is no such thing as several centres. This consideration leads to the rejection of "universal history", and in this Tillich is in full agreement with Croce and Collingwood.

(1) Cf. Tillich, Paul, The Interpretation of History, p.248.

> Every statement in which several centres of history and consequently several beginnings and ends of different historical developments are assumed, is an expression of non-historical thinking. The category of "beside one another" is a spatial not a temporal category...The centre is absolute or it is no centre at all. (1)

Now the claim to possess (and to be possessed by) a centre of history is the claim which is expressed in Christianity in the idea of the Christ.

> ...and the problem implied in this claim in Christian theology is treated as the Christological problem. For Christian thoughts Christ is the centre of history in which beginning and end, meaning and purpose of history are constituted. (2)

This centre of history is "past" in the sense that the centre is given as a fact for every consciousness of history that is dependent upon it..." On the other hand, although this centre is given as past fact, it has a meaningful presence in the historical consciousness of the people who are gripped by it and receive it. This is what is meant by the suprahistorical reality of the Christ: it is the presence of the past in the present.

The decision which is made on the basis of this centre, and in which meaninglessness is overcome, is made in history itself. But since it is made in history, i.e., in the realm of the ambiguous, it never escapes the character of historical decision—— <u>for</u> this and <u>against</u> that. Thus we can say that Vico's belief

(1) Tillich, Paul, <u>The Interpretation of History</u>, p.251.

(2) <u>ibid</u>, p.251.

that he could discern an "ideal and eternal history"; Croce's decision that history is the manifestation of the Spirit as it acts creatively in concrete event; Collingwood's belief that we can re-create and enter into historical events——these are all decisions arising out of ambiguous historical evidence which can be and has been interpreted in other ways. This means that any and all of these decisions contain an element of belief, daring and hope. Or, more concisely, there is no concrete interpretation of history without faith.(1) Thus, these affirmations of meaning over meaninglessness in the historical process, affirmations which have been made in faith, are all descriptions of what is known in Christian terminology as "salvation". "If history is affirmed——[this] is the result of our whole analysis——it is affirmed as history of salvation."(2) This again means that the problem of history combines with the Christological problem.

What Tillich is doing in this, he admits, is to give an abstract and universal meaning to the Christological idea.(3) He feels that this is justified in that it, first, makes the claim that only at this point in history——Jesus as the Christ——is the victory over meaninglessness fundamentally realized. And secondly,

(1) Cf. Tillich, Paul, The Interpretation of History, p.256.

(2) ibid., p.256.

(3) Cf. ibid., p.259.

> This generalizing use at the same time prevents Christology from appearing as a strange insertion within the trend of ideas concerning the philosophy of history. On the contrary, by this generalization Christology becomes the possible answer to the basic question implied in history, an answer, of course, which can never be proved by arguments [just as it never can in the case of Vico or Croce or Collingwood], but is a matter of decision and fate.(1)

As a result of this whole argument Tillich comes to the far-reaching conclusion that it is fruitless to continue the old discussion of the two natures of the Christ, but that this discussion must be transformed into the problem of our present situation, i.e., the problem of the interpretation of history.(2) The proper theological task is to make visible the reality of this centre of history by pointing to its power of giving meaning to our existence and of overcoming the threat of meaninglessness.

> We replace the inadequate concept "divine nature" by the concepts "eternal God-man-unity" or "Eternal God-Manhood". Such concepts replace a static essence by a dynamic relation. The uniqueness of this relation is in no way reduced by its dynamic character; but, by eliminating the concept of "two natures", which lie beside each other like blocks and whose unity cannot be understood at all, we are open to the relational concepts which make understandable the dynamic picture of Jesus as the Christ.(3)

And finally to sum up Tillich's understanding of the relation between history and Christology:

(1) Tillich, Paul, The Interpretation of History, p.259.

(2) Cf. ibid., p.261.

(3) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, II, p.148.

> ...the Christological problem becomes the most direct problem of our present existence, because it is determined by history. To practise Christology does not mean to turn backward to an unknown historical past or to exert oneself about the applicability of questionable mythical categories to an unknown historical personality. It means to look at the centre of history that is our centre, the principle that gives meaning to our historical activities, that makes history a history of salvation for us, that gives us an expectation of an eternal future in which meaninglessness is conquered. To look at this centre, to interpret it, to relate it through negations and affirmations to the whole of history, to make its claim comprehensible and to argue for the superiority of its claim in theory and practice--that is Christology today. It decides about the Christian claim that Christianity attests to the center of history in testifying for Christ. So, in our situation, Christology and the interpretation of history revolve about an identical basic question.(1)

Tillich and the "philosophy of history". Does Tillich engage in the "philosophy of history"? We have examined passages which give this appearance. Yet if he does, it is in a way which avoids many of the objections to it which we examined in Part II. The central objection posed so effectively by Croce and Collingwood is that the "philosophy of history" leads the historian to tailor his evidence to suit his "philosophy of history". Hence Collingwood's criticism of Toynbee, for example. But it is just this which Tillich consistently disavows; and this not only in principle, but also in his refusal to tailor historical evidence to suit his own arguments.

(1) Tillich, Paul, The Interpretation of History, p.265.

> For the historian the revelatory interpretation of history [elements of which we have just seen in our discussion of history and Christology] ...neither confirms nor negates any of his statements about documents, traditions, and the interdependence of historical events. (1)

This not only applies to general history, but it also applies to Biblical hermeneutics. Even here there can be no tailoring of evidence to suit or support a revelatory interpretation of history, theological position, "philosophy of history" etc.

> [The Christological question], moreover, is entirely independent of the problems of historical inquiry into the facts behind the rise of the Biblical picture of Christ.(2) The exposition of those facts can only lend probability——and with respect to the historical Jesus, a very faint probability. No religious certainty, no religious belief can be supported by such researches.(3)

In short, Religious belief and revelatory interpretation of history cannot affect, cannot impose themselves upon historical research. This is the basis of Tillich's criticism of all Utopian interpretations of history. These interpretations take concepts such as a myth of an original or final epoch, the classless society or the Kingdom of God from the "beyond" where they belong, and where they have validity as a basis for certain insights into concrete historical events, and then proceed to

(1) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I. p.129.

(2) This is an overstatement, probably for polemical reasons. Other statements in Tillich make it clear that he recognizes theology's dependence upon history, at least to this extent, that the theologian is not indifferent to the historical question of whether or not Jesus of Nazareth did in fact live——was an "existent". In any case, this is another question, and one which does not alter the point he is trying to make here.

(3) Tillich, Paul, The Interpretation of History, pp.264-265.

project them into this world as a basis for empirical historical inquiry. In this way "The myth is rationally superficialized." As a result historical evidence is construed to produce absurdities such as the "The Age of the Spirit" or primitive communism. This is, exactly, the projection of meaning into history from a point beyond history.(1)

Another way of indicating the opposition of the whole tenor of Tillich's thought to "philosophy of history" is to point out the fact that such a philosophy would be a violation of the Protestant principle.

> The unconditional cannot be identified with any given reality, whether past or future; there is no absolute church, there is no absolute kingdom of reason and justice in history. A conditional reality set up as something unconditional...is an "idol." This prophetic criticism, launched in the name of the unconditional, breaks the absolute church and the absolute society...(2)

"Conditional realities" also include "philosophies of history" which would dictate absolute patterns of history to which events must conform. This is "heteronomy"; and in defining this term, Tillich, characteristically, takes the discussion a step beyond the final position of all of our previous discussions in this area.

> Heteronomy imposes a strange (heteros) law (nomos) on one or all of the functions of reason. It issues commands from "outside" on how reason should grasp and shape reality. But this "outside" is not merely outside. It represents, at

(1) Cf. Tillich, Paul, The Interpretation of History, p.97.

(2) Tillich, Paul, The Protestant Era, p.43.

> the same time, an element in reason itself, namely, the depth of reason...A heteronomous authority usually expresses itself in terms of myth and cult because these are the direct and intentional expressions of the depth of reason. It is also possible for nonmythical and nonritual forms to gain power over the mind (e.g., political ideas). Heteronomy in this sense is usually a reaction against an autonomy which has lost its depth and has become empty and powerless. But as a reaction it is destructive, denying to reason the right of autonomy and destroying its structural laws from outside. (1)

The concept of heteronomy, which "issues commands from outside on how reason should grasp and shape reality", describes very well what is objectionable in the "philosophy of history". But then Tillich goes on to make explicit a most important element in this matter; one which has been, at best, only implicit in our previously examined statements about the "philosophy of history". He does this by cautioning us about the spatial metaphors which we have frequently used, namely, "outside". "Outside" can just as well be "inside"; the call for a "philosophy of history" arises "inside" of man. It is the answer to a need man feels "inwardly"; he is compelled to write it; hence the perennial popularity of the "philosophy of history".

Tillich develops this by saying that the heteronomy of the "philosophy of history" arises out of the "depth of reason". This latter concept we discussed earlier, and we can briefly define it as the "substance" or "ground" or "abyss" of reason which precedes reason and is manifest through it(2)

(1) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, pp.84-85.

(2) Ibid., p.79.

He further points out that heteronomous expressions of the "depth of reason" (which would include the "philosophy of history") arise as a reaction against an empty autonomy. We had an indication that this is the case when Collingwood said that dissatisfaction with the listing of events (an empty autonomy) led some men to "periodize" history, and then to develop a "philosophy of history". Tillich's analysis is obviously and dramatically true in the case of the Nazi "philosophy of History".(1)

Heteronomy is a destructive effort to assert an aspect of human life which is nevertheless genuine and necessary. (The "depth of reason" is Tillich's term for this aspect of life, although there are many other possible expressions.) But ~~it~~ heteronomy is a destructive expression; destructive of another and also genuine aspect of human life and thought: autonomy. This latter term is not used in the pejorative sense of the state in which an individual is a law unto himself. Rather it means:

> ...the obedience of the individual to the law of reason, which he finds in himself as a rational being. The nomos ("law") of autos ("self") is not the law of one's personality structure. It is the law of subjective-objective reason; it is the law implied in the logos structure of mind and reality. (2)

(1) The Nazis did have a "philosophy of history", however absurd, in which history was forced to conform to non-empirical concepts, e.g., Arian race and Fatherland.

(2) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, p.84.

Historically, autonomous reason has liberated and maintained itself in a never ending fight with heteronomy. We saw this fight taking place in large sections of Part II in terms of the conflict between autonomous historical inquiry and the various forms of non-history. It is a conflict within reason itself. (Where else could it be!) In this conflict Croce and Collingwood chose to ignore for the most part "the depth of reason"; although Croce's "philosophy of the Spirit" might be judged to express in part the "depth of reason". Vico, on the other hand, made the effort to unite autonomous history with the "depth of reason" in his "ideal and eternal history". This effort was of very limited success, as we have seen, and Vico's importance does not rest upon this attempt.

Tillich sees in this conflict between autonomy and heteronomy a call for or a need for resolution. This resolution he calls "theonomy", a resolution which is only possible through revelation.

> Autonomy and heteronomy are rooted in theonomy, and each goes astray when their theonomous unity is broken. Theonomy does not mean the acceptance of a divine law imposed on reason by a highest authority [heteronomy]; it means autonomous reason united with its own depth. In a theonomous situation reason actualizes itself in obedience to its structural laws and in the power of its own inexhaustible ground. Since God (theos) is the law (nomos) for both the structure and ground of reason, they are united in him, and their unity is manifest in a theonomous situation. But [Tillich cautions] there is no complete theonomy under the conditions of existence. (1)

(1) Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, p.85. Italics mine.

What does this mean in terms of our problem, the understanding of history? It means that the heteronomously expressed insight of the "philosophy of history" is united with the insight into history expressed by autonomous historical research. The first insight is that everything relative can become a vehicle for the absolute. Tillich refers to this kind of history as "absolute interpretations of history". And this absolute interpretation of history is what has been expressed in varying ways and with varying degrees of success by Augustine, Vico, Hegel, Marx, Toynbee and other writers of the "philosophy of history". These men have seen that history is not self-explanatory; that from the "ground of reason" a call is raised for an explanation of history which goes beyond that which can be provided by a strict autonomy; and that finite, historical event can become a manifestation of the unconditioned.

The second insight, that which we explored at length in Part II and which is to be united with the first, is the insight that nothing relative can ever become absolute itself.(1) This is the position of autonomous historical inquiry. We have developed this insight sufficiently in the foregoing discussion that we need not say anything further at this point.

(1) Cf. Tillich, Paul, The Protestant Era, p.53.

This then is the demand: that the insight of those who subscribe to the various absolute interpretations of history be united with the insight of those who see the necessity of antonomous historical research. But this demand contains a genuine paradox, i.e., that the absolute and the relative be united. This means that the Kairos, the determinative centre of history, should be absolute; and yet not absolute, but under the judgment of the absolute. And this happens, the demand is fulfilled, when the conditioned (the concrete, historical Kairos) surrenders itself to become a vehicle for the unconditional (the Logos). It happens when the Kairos claims nothing for itself, does not impose itself upon history, and yet opens itself to and becomes a vehicle of the Unconditional. And just this is what happens in the person of Jesus the Christ; just here the transcendent (the Logos) becomes immanent in the Kairos, and yet it does not heteronomously impose itself. This Kairos can only be received in a situation of theonomy; and the interpretation of history which grows out of it is theonomous.

> The divine, for such a state of mind, is not a problem but a presupposition. Its "givenness" is more certain than that of anything else. This situation finds expression, first of all, in the dominating power of the religious sphere, but not in such a way as to make religion a special form of life ruling over the other forms. Rather, religion is the life-blood, the inner power, the ultimate meaning of all life...There is no profane nature or history, no profane ego, and no profane world. All history is sacred history...the separation of subject and object is missing; things are considered more as powers than as things. (1)

(1) Tillich, Paul, The Protestant Era, p.49. Italics mine.

In this situation one could not ask: In what specific way is this religious or theological understanding of history determinative for history in general? That would still be heteronomy. In this situation there would be no special way of "doing" history no special hermeneutics; no interference with the element of autonomy in reason. (The relative and autonomous interpretation of history is supported in this.) There would just be history, hermeneutics and reason in a theonomous situation. History would be dependent upon and would point toward the Kairos, i.e., in its unique and universal sense as the appearance of Jesus as the Christ. (The insight of the absolute interpretations of history that the absolute is present in the historical process is supported in this.) The presuppositions and conclusions of history would not be in conflict with the Kairos.

Tillich further characterizes theonomous history in the following way. (Once again let us remind ourselves that there is never a perfectly theonomous period in history; autonomy and theonomy are never brought completely into a theonomous resolution.)

> There is, in the doctrine of the kairos, no final stage in which dialectics, against its nature, ceases to operate. There is, in the doctrine of the kairos, not only the horizontal dialectic of the historical process but also the vertical dialectic operating between the unconditional and the conditioned. And, finally, there is no logical, physical, or economic necessity in the historical process, according to the doctrine of the kairos. It moves through that unity of freedom and fate which [we have seen] distinguishes history from nature.(1)

(1) Tillich, Paul, The Protestant Era, p.55.

This theonomous situation is the solution to the problem posed in the introduction to this chapter. This problem is, on the one hand, that for the religious view there is in history a supratemporal element which cannot be reduced to historical terms, nor can it be set alongside of general history as something which has a separate history, i.e., as if there were a sort of miraculous, holy history which in some strange and unexplainable way is neither identical with nor parallel with general history. On the other hand there is the rational theory that sacred history is nothing but a part of general history; a theory which leaves the self-sufficient finitude of the historical untouched. This impossible situation is redeemed by the understanding of history based upon the Kairos and the attitude of theonomy; here the absolute and the relative are united. To alter slightly a characteristic idea of Tillich's: "The confidence of history, its courage to be, is rooted in faith in God as its creative ground.(1)

6. Tillich Corrective to the Christian Attitude to History: Belief-ful Realism.

At the end we turn to Tillich's concept of "belief-ful realism". It could very well have stood at the beginning, for

(1) Cf. Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, p.270.

it is the presupposition of his theology as well as the conclusion.(1) That which follows will be recognized as a convenient, pointed summary of what we have said before in other contexts.

Faith or belief is an attitude which transcends every empirical reality. Realism is an attitude which rejects the transcendent and every transcending of reality. Yet the two are combined into one concept: belief-ful realism. This concept is a denial of realism, i.e., of self-sufficient finitude, of strict subject-object thinking and the dominance of controlling knowledge, of empty autonomy and so on. At the same time it is a denial of belief insofar as that is a supranaturalism without a serious regard for concrete historical event and the autonomous aspect of reason.

Positively, belief-ful realism is a total attitude toward reality in which it is asserted, on the one hand, that there is a transcendence expressed in and through the historical form which yet does not break that form. Or in other words, there is a "free devotion of finite forms to the eternal". On the other hand it is also asserted that there is to be an "unconditioned acceptance of the serious importance of our concrete situation in time and of the situation of time in general in the presence of eternity..."(2) The system of finite forms is to remain as it is

(1) The term "belief-ful realism" appears in Tillich's early writings, and is the central concept of The Religious Situation. However the term does not appear in the Systematic Theology, although obviously the concept remains.

(2) Tillich, Paul, The Religious Situation, p.116.

they are neither to be escaped through some sort of transcendentalism, nor are they to be broken heteronomously. Yet at the same time, they must be broken through as a whole; a free devotion of the finite forms to the eternal. This is the theonomous situation.

How else, Tillich asks, does theology proceed than by working through reality? Must not faith look into the depth of real things? Is not man's historical situation, including the facts of death, guilt and salvation, an essential part of theology? Any other approach than this could be supported only by reference to a supranaturalistic authority. But that would mean that reality has no ultimate significance at all, that there is a gulf between belief and reality producing a belief that is estranged from reality on the one hand, and on the other hand a reality which is considered without belief.(1) This is nothing else than the denial of the doctrine of Creation.

In opposition to this Tillich maintains the attitude of belief-ful realism. On the basis of this attitude theological or religious statements are statements about reality, but about a reality which is genuinely transcended. The transcendent is immanent.

(1) Cf. Tillich, Paul, The Protestant Era, p.98.

PART IV

THE HISTORICAL BASIS OF THEOLOGY, AND THE THEOLOGICAL BASIS OF HISTORY.

"History may be servitude,/History may be freedom."

Little Gidding: T.S. Eliot

Chapter VIII

THE HISTORICAL BASIS OF THEOLOGY, AND THE THEOLOGICAL BASIS OF HISTORY.

1. A comparison of Historical and Theological Method.

We have now completed our examination of the understanding of history as it is found in the work of Vico, Croce and Collingwood; and of the understanding of history and theology as it is found in the work of Bultmann and Tillich. In the course of this examination we have had occasion to draw attention to specific similarities and differences between these two disciplines. The results of these brief, specific comparisons call for a sustained and comprehensive examination of the complex relationship which exists between history and theology. In doing this we will be particularly concerned with the relevance of history to theology.

In order to facilitate this discussion our approach will be to concentrate first on certain similarities between history and theology which, although important, might be characterized as preliminary. With this preparation we will then proceed to the crux of our argument: the place of "re-enactment" in history and theology.

"Pre-understanding" in history and theology. "Pre-understanding" in history and theology is the awareness which is brought to each of those studies of their own proper task. This awareness, however imperfect, is the essential pre-condition of thinking historically and theologically.

This can be explained most clearly by giving examples. Concerning history, what is it that we bring to the study of, say, Caesar's invasion of Britain in 55 B.C.? We bring a "pre-understanding" of the way in which an historical event takes place, and hence an awareness of the sort of question we may legitimately ask of that event in the hope of receiving an answer. This awareness arises out of previous historical experience (some of it of a very informal or practical kind), and including such factors as the recognition that there was a motivation for the invasion, that preparation took place, that difficulties were encountered etc. Abstractly, this 'pre-understanding" is the awareness that a specific historical event grows out of a previous historical situation, is motivated, proceeds rationally, conforms to geographical and economic conditions etc. This "pre-understanding" is not "written in heaven", although it is assumed to the extent that there is a temptation implicitly to give it some such exalted (self-evident) status. Actually it arises out of the previous historical experience we have spoken of, and without it historical inquiry is impossible.

Turning to theology, let us give another specific example of "pre-understanding." What is it that St. Paul brought to his encounter with Jesus Christ on the Damascus road? He brought a "pre-understanding" of the way in which God works, e.g., that there is one God, who has given a Law, that God uses men to do

his will, that God has promised a Messiah etc. Here again "pre-understanding" is not self-evident, but it has grown out of the religious-historical experience of the Jewish people; and without it Paul could not have received Jesus as the Christ.

These examples indicate the nature of 'pre-understanding'. Just as it underlies the ability of the historian to explore his problem by asking the proper questions concerning Caesar's invasion of Britain, so it also underlies the ability of Paul to explore his problem (i.e., the relationship between Jesus Christ and himself) by asking the proper questions of the event of Jesus as the Christ. We might express this more concisely by saying that "pre-understanding" is an essential element in being able to think historically and theologically; of being able to ask the right questions and to <u>receive</u> the answers to those questions. The answers may disappoint the questioner; or they may so far surpass his expectations as to show him that his former position was almost entirely erroneous. Nevertheless the fact remains that it is <u>only</u> on the basis of 'pre-understanding" that men are enabled to ask questions of history and of God's action in history which are productive of increased historical and theological knowledge.

The question which presents itself at this point is: What is the origin of 'pre-understanding,' and when did it start? The "pre-understanding" appropriate to history is, as we have seen

in part II, the precondition of history; and in itself testifies to the experience of a previous encounter with history. It follows from this that historical knowledge can only grow out of historical knowledge. Historical thinking is "an original and fundamental activity of the human mind".(1) Similarly the 'pre-understanding' appropriate to theology is the precondition of the reception of revelation; and in itself testifies to the reception of previous revelation. As long as man has been man, as long as he has been in the "image of God", he has been man in relationship with God. It is a fruitless and theoretical question to ask about the "beginning" of history and the "beginning" of revelation, for in this context the concept of "beginning" cannot be given any content.

The great similarity between the nature and role of 'pre-understanding' in history and its nature and role in theology should not surprise us; for (among other things) both forms of 'pre-understanding' contain within them the ontological question, the question of being. In Christianity at least (and in a different way in Judaism) the question about being is explicit; it is concerned with the creation (the Father), redemption (the Son) and the sustaining (the Holy Spirit) of man's being. The Creation story particularly, and the Old Testament as a whole, speaks to the question of why there is being and not non-being.

(1) The Idea of History p.247. For our previously stated qualification of this statement, see pp. 222ff. supra.

The New Testament tells us of the "new being" which has appeared in Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit whose power enables us to make this "new being" a part of our own being. Revelation is not derived from the ontological question and 'pre-understanding," but they are a part of the basis upon which revelation is received.

In history too the question of being is asked; and although it is asked <u>implicitly</u> here, it is no less essential. The ontological question is present in the historian's implicit questions: Why is there form and not chaos, causality and not blind chance, rational order and not irrationality etc? Collingwood, also implicitly, points in the direction of this understanding of history in his answer to the question: What is history for? "My answer is that history is 'for' human self-knowledge... Knowing yourself means knowing, first, what it is to be a man; ..."(1) (2)

It is the asking and answering of the question of being in

(1) <u>The Idea of History</u>, p.10.

(2) The following passage from Collingwood both enlightens and is enlightened by our discussion at this point: "To fancy that religion lives either below or above the limits of reflective thought is fatally to misconceive either the nature of religion or the nature of reflective thought. It would be nearer the truth to say that in religion the life of reflection is concentrated in its intensest form, and that the special problems of theoretical and practical life all take their special forms by segregation out of the body of the religious consciousness, and retain their vitality only so far as they preserve their connection with it and with each other in it". <u>The Idea of History</u>, p.315.

an invalid way which marks "philosophy of history". Such "philosophies" say: Look, this is how history forms a rationally coherent whole, and in it we see man in his development, his present nature and his future destiny. For the historical reasons which we have discussed at length, this approach to history is invalid; but it is an implicit attempt to answer the ontological question.

In a less grandiose way the more cautious historians are also implicitly dealing with the ontological question, as the quotations which we have just made from Collingwood indicate. Croce too can be seen to be moving in the area of this question when he speaks, as he frequently does, of the "spirit" of man becoming aware of and developing its potentialities in the course of history. What is man? Look at history, he replies. In short, the ontological question is a part of the 'pre-understanding"which is brought not only to theology, but also to history.

Concerning the validity of the whole conception of"pre-understanding' in its relation to history we have argued at length in Part II, and we will let its defence rest there. However, concerning 'pre-understanding"in its applicability to theology, we would ask this further question: What alternative can be offered? Are we to say that revelation is not received on the basis of 'pre-understanding', but on the basis of a total

passiveness before the revelation of God? Such a position is usually associated with the idea that the Holy Spirit, in isolation from all other modes of preparation for the reception of knowledge, in some mysterious way enables revelation to be received. If there is some such mysterious and separate way, then we need to have a description of it. The rejoinder at this point might be that this separate way is so mysterious that it defies any description. If this is the case, if it cannot be described, then on what basis are we to say that it exists or does not exist? Here the insight of linguistic philosophers can be of real service to us by making us aware that we have made a "meaningless" statement, i.e., since it is indescribable, there is no basis upon which to judge it true or false, it can neither be affirmed or denied.

Quite apart from this difficulty, there is another unquestioned assumption about this "separate way" which we would like to question. The assumption is that this radically separate way of receiving revelation, this passiveness before God, in some way redounds to the honour of God. Why? If God has chosen to reveal himself to man in a way which includes such factors as 'pre-understanding' which have distinct parallels in human knowledge as a whole, why should this not equally redound to his honour? Or, how does one argue this in any way dishonours God?

Finally, in regard to this "separate way" by which we are supposed to receive the revelation of God, it must be pointed out that if we accept this theology then we have established a dualism between sacred and secular which can never be overcome. Even in the Incarnation it will not be overcome, for that revelation too will have been received on the basis of this dualism, and hence infected by it. In taking this position there is no confusion of the separateness of the Creator and the created. Nor is it our intention to deny the dualism which runs throughout the Old and New Testaments; namely, that of the righteousness of God and the sinfulness of man, together with the consequent alienation of man from God. Such a dualism is very evident. However it is quite another matter to go on and say that when the Holy Spirit enables us to affirm an historical event as sign-event that the resulting knowledge is without any connection with human knowledge; that our mode of apprehending the logos and the Logos possess no significant similarity; that knowledge of revelation comes to us by the Holy Spirit, but, since it does not come to us like any other form of knowledge, it is difficult to say just how it does come to us. This is to make our knowledge of God strange and alien, and invites the use of such concepts as that of "self-authentication". In this we do not see human reason judged and fulfilled——and human reason very much needs to be judged and

fulfilled——but only overcome. In this situation what content are we to give to the concept of man being in the "image of God"? And what use can the human enterprise make of this totally different knowledge?

In contrast to all this we have shown that in such factors as 'pre-understanding' concern and "re-enactment" there are genuine parallels between ordinary knowledge and knowledge of revelation; parallels which are illuminating when we turn our attention to either form of knowledge. We have also expressed this by saying that one aspect of being human, of being in the "image of God", is to be in relationship (however imperfect) with God. And this relationship is based upon the previous revelation (however inadequate) of God to man. As long as man has been man, he has been man in relationship with God; he has been in the "image of God". And an integral part of this relationship with God given by previous revelation is that man possesses the 'pre-understanding"(including the asking of the ontological question) which enables further revelation to be received. 'Pre-understanding"is part of the structure of human understanding, given by God, and used by God the Holy Spirit to enable man to receive God's freely given revelation of himself.

In this way we have argued against any radical dualism between ordinary knowledge and knowledge of revelation; and we have done this without confusing the distinctiveness of the two

forms of knowledge, and without emptying the knowledge of revelation of the mystery proper to it. Moreover we have indicated (and we will return to this in the latter part of this chapter, and especially in our final discussion of the "philosophy of history" and meaning in history) that through revelation human reason finds itself judged and fulfilled——and this without the destruction of its own proper autonomy.

The idea of the receiving of revelation will play an important part throughout this chapter. Therefore, in spite of the fact that this will anticipate our subsequent discussion to some extent, it will be helpful to state concisely at this point the concept of revelation which has arisen out of our total investigation and which is operative here. Revelation consists of two parts which must be distinguished in the interests of clarity of theology inquiry, but which are never separate in the actual receiving of revelation. The first part is that of an historical act in space and time, e.g., the events of the Exodus, the words of Isaiah, Jesus of Nazareth etc. These events are and must remain open to autonomous historical investigation; and this without any reservation. The second part of revelation is that in which the event in question is seen and affirmed as having not only a space-time significance (which it has and never ceases to have), but also

as having a transcendent reference. It is seen and affirmed as sign-event, as miracle. The description of the manner in which historical event is affirmed as sign-event is the burden of much of the ensuing discussion, but here it needs to be said concisely (and admittedly at this point rather abstractly) that this affirmation is made in the last analysis solely through the power of God the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit historical event is seen as sign-event; He is the link between the temporal and the Eternal. And the Holy Spirit is not, as F.W. Camfield has helpfully emphasized(1), a "quality" or "power" which can effect a union between the temporal and the Eternal because it is innate to both. Rather the Holy Spirit is of God alone; a gift coming from God and received by man enabling him to see historical event as sign-event, as miracle. Obviously it is here that the historian as historian cannot and does not wish to speak.

As a further preparation for our use of the concept of revelation we need to distinguish (following Tillich) between original revelation and dependent revelation. By original revelation we mean the first or original occasion upon which a man or men in a particular situation are grasped by the Holy Spirit and thus enabled to see an historical event as sign-event. The "occasion" upon which the apostles were first enabled to see Jesus of Nazareth as Jesus the Christ was Pentecost; and

(1) Cf. Camfield, F.W., Revelation and the Holy Spirit, Elliot Stock, London, 1933, pp.120,130,141 et passim.

this is the primary instance of original revelation. Concerning this primary instance, an implication of our position as to the operation of the Holy Spirit in revelation——and not only as it is stated here, but also as it has been prepared for in the preceding chapters——needs to be made explicit. This implication is that the Holy Spirit did not "descend" only upon Pentecost, but was continually "descending" from Easter onwards as the process of "re-enactment" took place in the lives of the apostles——rather in the manner of a fermentation.

In like manner dependent revelation also takes place when the gift of the Holy Spirit enables the affirmation to be made that an historical event is a sign-event; for example, when the contemporary believer affirms Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ. In this fundamental way it is the same as original revelation. However, dependent revelation is different in that it is dependent upon, and cannot come into being apart from, the original revelation preserved for us in the witness of the Church; and above all in the witness of the Church which we find recorded in Holy Scripture. This witness is not in and of itself revelation; but it becomes revelation when the power of the Holy Spirit enables us to affirm (i.e., to reaffirm) that the historical events recorded in Scripture are just what Scripture proclaims them to be, namely, sign-events. This dependent affirmation or reaffirmation is made not upon the authority of

the Scriptural authorities (Peter, Paul, the Evangelists etc.), but upon the authority of the Holy Spirit who, through the process of "re-enactment" in our own lives, enables the past Scriptural witness to become a living contemporary reality. Our affirmation is Spirit-authenticated. Holy Scripture as such is not the Word of God, but it is the essential instrument used by the Holy Spirit to enable the Word of God to appear in our lives. But this Word of God which is reaffirmed (and in being reaffirmed, reappears) is dependent upon and identical with the affirmation of the witness of the Church.

With this somewhat abstract statement as preparation, let us go on to examine the factors involved in this Spirit-directed process by which historical event is affirmed as sign-event.

Receiving groups. The historian and theologian bring "preunderstanding" to their allied yet distinctive tasks, but this "pre-understanding" is not first of all their own. Rather they express and sometimes develop the "pre-understanding" which they have received from the group of which they are a part and within which they work. In the case of the historians it is this group which receives and incorporates the work of a particular historical investigation; thereby changing, however infinitesimally, the 'pre-understanding' which is brought to future historical investigation. In the case of the theologians it is this group which receives and preserves the revelation of God; thereby

changing the "pre-understanding" which they bring to future revelation. Using Tillich's terminology here, we will call these groups "receiving groups".

For the historians whom we have studied the operative receiving group may broadly but meaningfully be characterized as that of Western civilization; a group which is Greco-Roman in origin and has been profoundly modified by Christianity. More specifically this receiving group is made up of those men (both lay and professional) within the tradition of Western civilization who have been seriously engaged in the problems of historical inquiry. That this group is no abstraction should be evident from our study of Vico, Croce and Collingwood. For one of the outstanding themes of all three of these men has been the vehement protest against the writers of false history (i.e., "heretics") who through the production of chronicles, philology, "philosophy of history" etc. lead men astray and corrupt the inquiry after historical truth. In this matter, and in much more, the historians whom we have studied speak out of an awareness of their membership in the group whose task is historical inquiry.

For the Christian theologian the receiving group is more clearly defined. It is that of the Hebrew-Christian people. Here the principle external influence is that of Greco-Roman thinking. For the theologian there is an explicit, self-conscious awareness of standing within a tradition; of opposing false theology; and of being responsible for the continuation

of the task of true theological inquiry within the Church—— within the receiving group. The receiving group of both the historian and the theologian are, when functionally described, very similar.

With respect to the past the function of both receiving groups is the preservation of the record of historical events; and including, necessarily, the fruit of the inquiry into these events. (For the historian this record includes, at least theoretically, all historical events; for the theologian this record is primarily but not exclusively that found in the Old and New Testaments.) With respect to the future, and the continuation of the vital life of the receiving group, the task of both receiving groups is the continuing development and dissemination of the 'pre-understanding"which is to be brought to bear, respectively, upon history and revelation in the future.

This second function of the receiving group, that in regard to the future, can be expressed in a variety of ways; and of these we will mention only two. The most obvious way in which the receiving group's 'pre-understanding' is developed is through the change wrought by new developments in the historical or theological heritage. As these new developments come to be accepted, a changed 'pre-understanding' emerges; and in turn this changed 'pre-understanding"results in history and revelation being apprehended in a new way. For example, after Vico's methodology and understanding of history became known, historical events could never be seen in the same way again.

e.g., they could never again be seen as composing a storehouse of wisdom which could be used as prescriptions for guiding public and private behaviour. This could not happen because there was a significantly new 'pre-understanding"which virtually forces the receiving group (i.e., the historians) to apprehend history in a different way.

The theological or religious heritage preserved by the receiving group brings about a similar change in 'pre-understanding," and with it a corresponding similar change in the way in which theology apprehends succeeding revelation. For example, our religious heritage tells us about the events of Moses, the prophets and Jesus Christ; and after each of these events there was a new understanding of God, with a resulting new 'pre-understanding"which is brought to all succeeding revelation.

Another way of indicating the role of the receiving group's 'pre-understanding' in the continuing development of history and theology is to point out that at different points in history receiving groups formulate the ontological question in different ways. For example, there is one 'pre-understanding"about this question implied in the Greek historians, who thought in terms of recurring cycles which were in some way expressive of a divine pattern; and this way is obviously different from that of Croce, who thinks of the "spirit" of man progressively changing and developing. In theology there is a similar change in the way in which the receiving group (the Church) formulates

the question of man's being; and these changes play a part in the changed way in which revelation is received. For example, the prophets brought about one change in the way in which man is understood; the event of Jesus Christ wrought another change; and the entry of Greek philosophy into Christian theology still another change. In modern times Luther's great emphasis on the threat of guilt in man's life indicates a different approach to the question of man's being from that of Tillich whose primary emphasis is upon the threat of meaninglessness in man's life. (Of course both Luther and Tillich show a concern for both guilt and meaninglessness; but it is the matter of emphasis which we are calling attention to here.) And again, as in the case of history, a change in 'pre-understanding' and in the asking of the question of man's being results in a change in the approach to the task of theology. Tillich and Bultmann do and must receive the revelation of God in a different way from Luther. It must be different because if the revelation is to be received, it must be received as the living, Spirit-filled answer to contemporary man's problems and questions. These problems and questions are always changing; which is another way of saying the 'pre-understanding' is always changing. It has always been the case that revelation has been received in this way, i.e., on the basis of a 'pre-understanding' which is always in the process of change. And because the pre-under-

standing"which is brought to revelation is constantly changing, so it follows that the problems and questions which men bring to their encounter with revelation are always changing. This ever changing, every new way in which revelation is encountered and received is one aspect of it being "the same yesterday, today and forever". If this were not the case, if we had in some way to recapture and enter into the "pre-understanding" possessed by the members of the earliest Church; then we would have to say of revelation, of the Gospel, not that it was always "the same", but that it was ever "more remote" from the situation in which we live.

The receiving group, then, is concrete, dynamic and always in the process of change; it lives in awareness of the tradition of which it is a present-day expression; and it seeks on the basis of its "pre-understanding" to find the answers to the contemporary problems which obscure historical and theological truth. (This is part of what is meant by the initially difficult phrase "all history is contemporary history". A full discussion of this will be found in the following pages.)

Receiving groups have this nature and spirit which we have described; and because this is so their members always work with an attitude of concern about concrete problems. In Vico, Croce and Collingwood we have seen the intensity of this concern, and the concrete way in which this concern manifests itself.

It is not a generalized enthusiasm for history, but the concern that specific historical evidence should not be handled falsely (e.g., as "philosophy of history") but truly (as "re-enactment"). If possible, this characteristic of receiving groups is demonstrated even more clearly in theology, e.g., Origen and his attack on Biblical literalism, Schleiermacher with his "cultural theology", Bultmann and his programme of demythologization, Tillich in his attack on the various forms of heteronomy etc. History and theology always begin with a specific problem (or problems) in which the historian or theologian focuses the concrete concern of the ongoing life of the receiving group.

History and theology distinguished. Having said so much about the similarity between history and theology, we must immediately go on to point out the difference between them. This difference is simply and concisely expressed in Bultmann's words: "But this is just the paradox of faith: it understands an ascertainable event in its context in nature and history as the act of God."(1) When the event is considered as an "event in its context in nature and history", then it is, and must be, considered as one which is of the same order as those events studied by the historian. But when such an event is seen as an

(1) Kerygma and Myth, p.199. Italics mine.

"act of God", as an event which points to God; then it is not only the proper subject of study for the historian, but also for the theologian, whose task it is as a member of the Church and on the basis of his "pre-understanding" and "re-enactment" to state in just what way this act addresses us as an "act of God". The historical events studied by the theologian are considered to have a transcendental reference; but this is never the situation for the historian.

When through the operation of the Holy Spirit an "ascertainable event in its context in nature and history" is understood and received as an act of God, then that "ascertainable event" is received as revelation. This event-as-revelation has an objective side indicating what was received, and which is traditionally termed "miracle"; and it has a subjective side indicating the way in which it was received, and this is traditionally termed "ecstasy".

In our examination of Tillich we called attention to the fact that the objective side, "miracle", could profitably be referred to as "sign-event". This term helps to indicate, as "miracle" does not, both of the primary characteristics of the revelatory event. The first primary characteristic is that it is "an ascertainable event in its context in nature and history", and as such a perfectly legitimate subject of study for natural science and history.(1) This first charac-

(1) It is this which renders so theologically questionably the attempt by the theologian to offer a description of the "event in its context in nature and history" which is both at variance with and exclusive of the explanation which would be offered by the scientist of historian, e.g., the attempt to insist that the Virgin Birth is a statment of biological fact.

teristic is preserved in the second half of the term "sign-event". The second primary characteristic of the revelatory event is that it points to God, i.e., that it has a transcendent reference. This understanding is preserved in the first half of the term "sign-event". History has no categories to deal with this aspect of the revelatory event.

Ecstasy is the situation in which "an ascertainable event in its context in nature and history" (the objective side of revelation) is recognized as having a transcendent reference; as being a "sign-event" pointing to God. Ecstasy has no necessary correlation with emotional disturbance (although the account of Pentecost indicates that such a correlation is not to be excluded); and even less does it have a necessary correlation with artificially induced emotional excitment. Rather ecstasy is, following the understanding of revelation stated near the beginning of this chapter, the situation in which the Holy Spirit acts in and through the historical event, and thus enables the believer to see that event as sign-event. We may say that in ecstasy the event is not only understood or grasped as an object of knowledge (an aspect which never disappears); but that also the believer is <u>grasped by</u> the event. More precisely, the believer is grasped by the power of the Holy Spirit, the power of God, as that power operates in and through the ascertainable historical event. And this power operating in

and through the event is the transcendent reference of that event; it is God himself, the God to whom the event points as a sign. Now, we not only know the event; but also, because the event is filled with a personal power superior and transcendent to ourselves, it can be said (recognizing fully the difficulty of this "logically strange" expression) that we are known by that which works in and through the event. The expression "known by", as we have used it here, is a difficult expression because we cannot assume the position of God, and consequently cannot say just what is constituted in being known by God. Nevertheless this "logically strange" affirmation is made because this power-full event is not made manifest through the operation of some impersonal life-force; but rather through the power of God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit coming to us in address and eliciting our obedient response. It is in this sense that we are "known by" God. Since this is the situation we say that in ecstasy that which concerns us unconditionally manifests itself; for the historical event itself (Jesus of Nazareth) is only a preliminary concern, but the transcendent reference of that event (Jesus as the Christ, as the Son of God) disclosed to me by the Holy Spirit concerns me unconditionally. In him I find the health, wholeness and purpose of my life.

But let us emphasize again that this being grasped by the Holy Spirit takes place only in and through the "re-enactment" of an ascertainable historical event, e.g., Paul's being

grasped on the Damascus road took place in and through Jesus of Nazareth, the preaching about him and Paul's reception of that preaching. It takes place through, the Holy Spirit operates through, the rational process of concern, "pre-understanding", questioning etc. which we have described. This rational process is not superceded or destroyed in ecstasy; but it is transcended when through the operation of the Holy Spirit the ascertainable event is seen as an event which points beyond itself to God.

It is evident that here there is no genuine parallel to history. In history there is intuition and imagination, but not ecstasy; not the operation of the Holy Spirit, at least not openly and in its most characteristic mode of operation. The significance of an historical event proceeds directly out of the "re-enactment" of that event "in its context in nature and history"; but the significance of an event which is perceived in ecstasy (e.g., Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ) is not arrived at simply through this process of "re-enactment". Rather there is an additional, Spirit-directed step in which one makes a free decision to understand this event also as a "sign-event", and obediently to respond to it as such.

It is this understanding of revelation which shows us the significance of myth as it is used in Christianity. Myth too is a sign pointing to the eternal, but in a different manner.

In Christian myth, as in the more direct revelation which we have been discussing (e.g., Jesus as the Christ), the finite points to the infinite; but unlike direct revelation the finite"events" of myth are not ascertainable events which can be located in the context of nature and history. For example, the events of the Creation story or the birth narratives cannot be located in the context of nature and history.(1) And yet the motivation and development of Christian myth springs from and must be consistent with some event which can be so located. This can be illustrated by the Creation story which, in its Old Testament form, is an indirect product of the Exodus. The understanding of God arrived at through the events of the Exodus provides both the motivation for the re-writing of this myth, and the concept of God which is developed there. In like manner the birth narratives in the New Testament are an indirect product of the revelation of Jesus as the Christ. In this case the picture of Christ presented in the birth narratives is consistent (as far as Christ's nature is concerned) with the picture which we find in the parts of the Gospels based upon ascertainable historical event.

This understanding of miracle and myth (which is heavily indebted to Tillich, although he might not agree with the way

(1) Because the Creation and birth stories (and other similar material in Scripture) have this nature, it is clearly inappropriate and misleading to treat them as if they could be located in a natural and historical context, i.e., to deal with them scientifically and historically. When these and similar accounts are reduced to literal records of actual events, then they become proper subjects for scientific and historical investigation. The only possible result is absurdity.

in which it has been developed here) seems to be more satisfactory than that which we found in Bultmann. In our understanding miracle and myth are preserved, and a basis is given which permits them to be deeply appreciated as an important part of Scripture. Indeed, this understanding enables them to be appreciated much more deeply than that strange, post-scientific point of view which insists that they be accepted literally or not at all. At the same time the unnecessary stumbling block, which is presented by miracle and myth when it is treated as a literal and supernaturally imposed event, is done away with. In Bultmann, on the other hand, we are never sure whether he wishes to keep the reinterpreted miracle and myth, or whether his intention is to dispose of them after their kernel of meaning has been abstracted. In a recent statement Bultmann maintains that it is his intention that miracle and myth be retained.(1) But, in any case, we do not find in Bultmann (and this is in great contrast to Tillich) any statement about the richness of miracle and myth as a special mode of theological statement; nor do we find an impressive treatment of any of the major Christian myths such as the Creation story or birth narratives.

Can history and theology be finally distinguished? We have shown the ways in which history and theology are similar, and then the way in which the two are distinctive. Finally we want to pose the question as to whether or not even the distinctions which we have drawn between history and theology are radical

(1) Bultmann, Rudolf, Jesus Christ and Mythology, SCM Press, London, 1960, p.18.

ones. This question is to be regarded not as a rhetorical question, but as a genuine one.

We have spoken of how the historian implicitly and in his own way asks the ontological question, i.e., why is there form and not chaos, reason and not irrationality, cause and not blind chance etc. Moreover, he not only implicitly asks these questions of concrete events; but he also proceeds on the basis of his belief that there is form, cause, reason etc. Above all he assumes that there is meaning in history; that concrete events are worthy of close study; and that these events are in some way capable of showing man the meaning which the historian assumes is to be found in history. This is true even though the various historians occupy very different positions as to how this meaning is to be discerned. All of this is so thoroughly accepted as to appear self-evident. Yet, is it? The tradition out of which all of this derives is that of Western civilization; a tradition profoundly influenced by Christianity. And this tradition of historical study which we know in the West is not practised (except derivatively) anywhere else; although if its assumptions and proceedures are truly self-evident we would expect it to be practised in all high civilizations.

How are we to explain this situation? It is to be hoped that no one wishes to offer the explanation that men in the West are in some way more intelligent. A more reasonable and obvious

explanation would seem to lie in saying that the assumptions peculiar to historical thinking in the West were taken over from the assumptions prevalent in Western civilization. These assumptions would be both Greco-Roman and Hebrew-Christian in origin, and just as the respective contributions of these two traditions have become subtly intertwined in Western civilization as a whole, so the respective contributions of these two traditions to historical study have become intertwined to the point where they defy any clean-cut separation. However, many of the assumptions of historical study can be identified as being primarily Greco-Roman or primarily Hebrew-Christian in origin. Thus the categories of form, cause and rationality can be seen to be primarily Greco-Roman in origin, regardless of how divergent their contemporary use is from their original use. Similarly, the assumption that concrete historical events are worthy of study and are a source of value in and of themselves, and not simply as a reflection of a divine pattern (the Greek idea), this assumption is primarily Hebrew-Christian in origin.(1) And, as we have mentioned before, the idea that history has a positive meaning which is to be located <u>within</u> history is peculiarly Hebrew-Christian. The origin of this idea is the affirmation that history is "salvation history";

(1) It is the Christian religion with its great stress upon the doctrines of Creation, the Incarnation and the Resurrection of the Body which enabled man to see the dignity and value of the created and historical order; and this not because it reflected "spiritual values", but as a quality proper to itself.

that salvation has come to us not through the mystical ability to escape from history, but through events which have taken place in space and time, viz., through the Law and the prophets, through the Jesus the Christ. This meaning is and must remain an affirmation, for it is impossible to maintain successfully that meaning in history can be discerned through the straightforward observation of historical "objective facts"——a situation which has been conveniently overlooked by those who have decided that the "salvation occurrence" is reason, a particular race, the classless society etc.

So the situation would seem to be as follows. There are certain concepts at work in Western historical thought such as the idea that historical event is worthy of serious study, history proceeds rationally, meaning is to be discerned in history etc. These concepts are assumptions, for history proceeds on the basis of such concepts, but does not and cannot prove that they are true. Moreover, these assumptions are not found in other civilizations,(1) but they are found in all areas of thought in Western civilization; and hence we assume that the source of these basic concepts, these assumptions in historical study, is the same as it is for Western civilization as a whole. Now some of these concepts can be identified as primarily Greco-Roman in origin, and some as primarily Hebrew-Christian in origin. Of the former we will not speak, but of

(1) For a recent and authoritative discussion of the non-historical character of Eastern thought see Man and Time, edited by Joseph Campbell, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1958, pp.115-200, 212-232.

the latter at least it is true that they are based on revelation. The net result of this argument is that the fundamental assumptions of historical study in the West are not self-evident, but are indirectly based upon Hebrew-Christian revelation. And so once again we are presented with a situation which makes us ask whether it is possible to make a radical distinction between history and theology.

We can describe this situation by saying that there is at work in the writing of history a "mythical element by means of which it is raised above a mere description of successive stages of finiteness."(1) This "mythical element" is not expressed in terms of any traditional myth; but in concepts which are fully rational, and yet contain an indication of the transcendence of history. These fully rational yet "mythical" concepts are just such concepts as those which we have been discussion, e.g., rational order, meaning, the dignity and value of concrete historical event etc.

To what extent do we find an indication of this transcendence of history in the three men whom we have studied? We have found it of course in Vico's "rational civil theology of divine providence". However we have noted the serious difficulties which Vico encountered in applying this to actual history.

(1) The ~~Idea~~ Interpretation of History, p.98.

Croce would have vehemently objected to the idea that there was anything at work in history which pointed to the transcendent, to God. But what do we actually find in Croce? We find such central ideas as that of Spirit being the source of value in history; and of history as being the story of liberty. Such ideas are not self-evident; they do not proceed directly from the evidence. History could be and has been written in which the primary source of value in history is seen in terms of economic development; or history could be written as the story of bondage. It is of course true that Croce is always at pains to speak of Spirit and liberty in terms of concrete historical events; but what he makes of these events is not the only possibility. There is in Croce an element of what we have termed here the "mythical", and by which history "is raised above a mere description of successive stages of finiteness". Croce himself wished to do this by having historical events point to Spirit; but by his use of the basic presuppositions which we have discussed he pointed beyond the "successive stages of finiteness" in a way he did not consciously intend.

Turning to Collingwood we have a smaller, less ambitious and less systematic body of work upon which to form an opinion. However, in Collingwood there is the "mythical" element, the element which points beyond the events themselves; and this takes place not only in the basic presuppositions common to all historical writing in the West, but also in such statements as "historical

thinking is an original and fundamental activity of the human mind"[1], "history does not presuppose mind; it is the life of mind itself"[2], and "The value of history...is that it teaches us what man has done and thus what man is."[3] In addition there is the fascinating but undeveloped statement by Collingwood which we have already quoted[4], and the meaning of which is in line with what we are saying in this section.[5]

In summary then, we have pointed out the ways in which history and theology are similar, and the ways in which they differ. This difference lies primarily in the transcendent reference revealed to us by the Holy Spirit in the historical events studied by theology; a reference which is focused above all in miracle and myth. We then went on to qualify even this difference by suggesting that history too has its own peculiar "mythology" which points beyond itself to the transcendent.

However, in conclusion, we may establish one limited but complete difference between history and theology; namely, that the main concerns of history are explicitly preliminary concerns,

(1) The Idea of History, p.247
(2) ibid., p.227.
(3) ibid., p.10.
(4) see p. 204 supra.
(5) In relation to our whole discussion here concerning the relationship between the theologian and the historian, it is interesting to compare Tillich remarks about the relationship between the thologian and the philosopher found in Systematic Theology, I, p.25.

while those of theology are explicitly of ultimate concern to us. The preliminary character of historical concern is seen clearly in the philological aspect of history, e.g., is this an accurate text?, has this journal been falsified?, how shall we classify these potsherds? etc. No one would maintain that the asking and answering of these questions, however important they are in their own way, contributes to the wholeness, direction and meaning which we seek to find in human life. In the more fundamental questions of historical inquiry, such as the reconstruction and interpretation of historical epochs, the concerns of history are still preliminary; although here their preliminary nature is not as evident. It is not as evident because the subject matter consists of the hopes and struggles which involved millions of people. Nevertheless even here the concerns are preliminary. For example, the historical interpretation which I place upon even so important an event as the French Revolution is not of ultimate importance in my determining the meaning of my life and of life in general; nor is it of any decisive importance in helping me to answer such questions as "Who am I?". This is not the task of history. For the Christian at least, the preliminary character of historical concern is made clear by drawing attention to the generally accepted view that the historical reconstruction of the life of Jesus of Nazareth can never be more than a preliminary concern for either the Christian

or the non-Christian. It is true that this preliminary concern, and many other preliminary concerns for that matter, can become the vehicle of ultimate concern; but they are not themselves of ultimate concern.

It may be objected here that we have previously said that history asks the ontological question, the question of being; and certainly this would go far toward qualifying history as being of more than preliminary concern. We did say this, but we also said that this asking of the ontological question is an implicit one; and not explicit as in theology. Moreover we have stated our reasons for maintaining that the form in which the ontological question is asked and the answer which it receives does not proceed solely and straightforwardly out of the historical evidence, but that it stands in a final dependence upon revelation. (This is seen most clearly in "philosophy of history", but it is also at work in genuine history.) Therefore even when history deals implicitly with matters of ultimate concern, it can do so only by standing in ultimate dependence upon revelation.

In contrast theology deals explicitly with the ontological question; with the question of "Who am I?". It speaks explicitly of the creation of being, of man, through the Father; of his redemption through the Son; and of his being sustained by the Holy Spirit. In theology we are concerned with the incorporation of man into God, into the ground of his being. This explicit task of theology is of ultimate concern to us, and here, and only here, theology stands in complete distinction from historical inquiry.

2. History and Theology as "Re-enactment".

a. The problem of finding a basis for history and theology.

We now come to that which unites all five of the men whom we have examined in this thesis: the struggle against a strict subject-object epistemology. Vico, Croce and Collingwood strove to demonstrate that history cannot be written on this basis; and Bultmann and Tillich, whose critics often fail to understand what they are attempting to do, strive to demonstrate that theology cannot be pursued on the basis of such an epistemology.

As we discussed in our chapter on Vico, the classical formulation of the subject-object epistemology given by Descartes establishes a problem which does not arise in genuine history. Descartes distinguishes between the subject with his ideas, and the object with its nature, i.e., he is concerned with the relationship between ideas and things——the problem of skepticism. But it is just this problem which does not arise in history, for historical study has no existence apart from the events of which it is the explanation. History is not something which exists abstractly in the mind of the historian (the subject), and which then may or may not be attached to an event or events (the object). History is nothing but the rational account of specific, concrete events in their interrelatedness; it is the synthesis of historical event and the historians thought about that event, and when the synthesis is broken history disappears. A second failure of Descartes in regard to

historical thinking is his criterion of admissable evidence; namely, that it be a clear and distinct idea. This criterion is as useless as is his epistemology; for, as the examination of any book of history beyond the text book level will make clear, historical evidence is never clear and distinct. Vico recognized and pointed out both of these Cartesian failures in respect to history.

Croce and Collingwood take up this argument and, in a clearer and more systematic way than Vico, demonstrate the falseness of history written on the basis of the Cartesian separation of subject and object, of interpretation and event. This false approach consists, as we need only to recapitulate here, in collecting numbers of objective facts ("brute" or "unthought" facts) and then either refining them (philology), listing them chronologically (chronology, "scissors and paste"), grouping them ("pigeon holing"), turning them to some practical use ("rhetorical" or "poetical" history), or imposing some external meaning upon them ("philosophy of history"). All of this is an attempt to write history on the basis of a strict subject-object epistemology; in the realm of "I and It". And, as we have discussed before, in spite of its long domination of the writing of history, the results are a patent failure.

Having seen the many similarities between history and theology, it should not surprise us when we come to Bultmann

and Tillich that the strong protest against the strict subject-object epistemology forms an important theme in their work too.

The focal point for Bultmann, especially as he is a New Testament theologian, is the problem of the right interpretation of documents. Therefore a major part of our examination of this theologian was formulated in terms of the problem of hermeneutics. What is the correct epistemology in approaching documents, and especially the New Testament documents? The crucial factor is just that which we have encountered in the historians. In Bultmann's own words: "For faith needs to be emancipated from its association with a world view expressed in objective terms, whether it be a mythical or a scientific one."(1) The demythologization controversy, whatever its own peculiar merits, is only an aspect of this larger struggle to free faith from an excessive subject-object epistemology. In spite of the fact that Bultmann's programme of demythologization has been under discussion for some years now, it does not seem to have made much progress toward a resolution of the problem. And it will not make much progress so long as the more fundamental problem of the suitability for theology of a "world view expressed in objective terms" is not discussed more fully and widely that it has been up to now.

The reason that this matter is so persistently avoided, as

(1) Kerygma and Myth, p.210.

well as the reason that Bultmann's critics so often miss the point of what he is saying, is that Bultmann (and Tillich too) is attacking a very alluring and comforting misconception with which Christians do not wish to part. This misconception is: the belief that there are historically ascertainable events (e.g., miracles) which exist apart from faith, and yet which can be used to support faith. This misconception could also be expressed in terms of our earlier discussion by saying that there exist certain events in their context in nature and history (e.g. Jesus' miracles of healing) which we are able to see apart from faith as having a transcendent reference; as being events which point to God. This is the objective basis of faith!

Those who attack Bultmann on this point say that he is dissolving the objective basis of faith, i.e., the mighty acts of God. If Bultmann is really doing this, if he is trying to create a theology which is not founded upon concrete historical events, then he is seriously in error. However, when one reads the actual words of Bultmann, in contrast to the words of his critics and paraphrasers, it is by no means evident that he is dissolving the genuine objective basis of faith. This is the crucial question in regard to Bultmann, and everything depends upon what is meant by "objective". If by this term is meant that there are objective ("brute", "unthought") facts (e.g., the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus at his baptism) which we may

then proceed to interpret and use as a support for faith; if this is what is meant, then Bultmann is dissolving the objective "basis"(!) of faith. If, on the other hand, by "objective" is meant the concrete historical events in their context in nature and history which the New Testament sees as events which point to God, and upon the basis of which it forms its statements about the person and work of the Christ; if this is what is meant, then Bultmann is not dissolving the objective basis of faith. Rather, he treats it in a much more convincing way than do those who are still held captive by the subject-object "mythology".

As we have seen in our chapter on Tillich, and again at the beginning of this chapter where we discussed miracle, ecstasy and mythology, Tillich is in substantial agreement with Bultmann as regards the matter of subject and object in theology. The point at which this agreement becomes most explicit is where Tillich speaks of the Biblical picture of Christ as being independent of the problems of historical inquiry into the facts which lay behind this picture.(1) As we said before in our discussion of this apparently polemical and hence exaggerated statement, its intention is not to deny that there is an historical correlative to that Biblical picture; but it does deny that there are a body of facts known apart from faith (i.e.,

(1) Cf. The Interpretation of History, p.265. Cf. supra p. 393.

apart from the Biblical picture) which point to God and hence can be used to support our faith.

So it is that the positions of Tillich and Bultmann are substantially the same. However, characteristically, Tillich goes on to qualify his position in this matter; and as usual this qualification embodies a useful distinction. He agrees of course that in the act of receiving knowledge the subject does not stand apart from its object, but enters into union with it; yet, he goes on to point out, the element of detachment of the subject (the knower) from the object (the known) is never completely destroyed. In the act of knowing union and detachment are in strict interdependence, and it is impossible to destroy the one or the other. Moreover, in those acts of knowing where we are striving to establish a technique or to control some thing, the element of detachment is necessarily the predominant one. The most obvious example of this is the whole field of technology; and in a technological civilization there is the constant movement to transform the whole of reality into a thing which can be controlled. Whenever we see a strict or predominatingly subject-object epistemology at work, then we know that the intention is to control the object; and in the case of theology this means that the intention is to control God. There may be the intention, in a second step, to be con-

trolled by or to submit to God; but this God is one who has already been brought under control in the first step. The false theology which results from this approach is the theological equivalent of the false history which we have discussed previously. Let us list some of these equivalents.

In history the controlling, subject-object epistemology is used to produce a false history which we have called chronology, i.e., the listing of "facts". The theological equivalent of this is manifested in those theologies which are conceived predominantly in propositional, non-existential terms. The commonest example of this is to be found in the text books and compendiums of theology. Here there is static, objective and propositional theology in which the religious problems, both of the contemporary world and the world out of which the propositions took their rise, remain at best implicit. The same situation is to be found in the doctrinal formulations of various orthodoxies. As chronology has its place in history, so such compendiums have their place in theology; but they are not theology. Theology is living doctrine; propositionally stated doctrine is dead theology.

The theological equivalent of "philology" is seen in many Biblical word studies and in much Old and New Testament exegesis. Here the words which we have seen Croce applying to history are equally applicable to theology; namely, "documents that have been restored, reproduced, described, brought into line, remain

documents——that is to say, silent things."[1] The document is never questioned as to the motivation of the author, the validity of the document both in the past and in the present as a statement of man's relationship with God, and above all how this document affects my own relationship to God. Both "philology" and its theological equivalent have their respective places in history and theology; but as the one is not living history, so the other is not in itself an expression of living theology or faith.

The theological equivalent of "universal history" is the history of religions.[2] The errors of both are the same. First, since obviously everything cannot be included, there is necessarily an initial bias with its ensuing falsification in the selection of the material which is to be included. The falsification is often compounded with a second; namely, that in the effort to present a comprehensive survey of the history of religions various "dark periods" must be filled in in one way or another. To this is frequently added a more serious difficulty when the attempt is made to develop some thesis about the development of religions, e.g., that religion is the neurotic attempt to deal with feelings of inadequacy. Now such neurotic attempts play a part in probably all religion, and we are the richer for having this brought forcefully to our attention; but the historically and theologically objectionable aspect of this

(1) Theory and History of Historiography, p.37.

(2) The type of history of religions which we have in mind here is either the sweeping survey of world religions, or the relatively brief "explanations" of a particular religion.

presentation is the rather obvious selection and tailoring of evidence to suit the thesis, together with the implicit or even explicit claim that this is the true interpretation of religion[1] However the final objection to the history of religions is really the fundamental one. This objection is that the writers of such histories assume that the religious facts and events of history (concerning Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism etc.) are objective things which can be had by reproducing certain words from a book or manuscript; and that these can then be moved about like checkers in order to suit the author's thesis. In order to do this one must assume, since Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism etc. each represent a particular historical development and point of view, that he can enter equally into each at will in order to procure the insights of each. And in the case of Christianity, Judaism and Mohammedism, each of which depend upon a specific event in history which forms the center of history, the author of a history of religion assumes that he can simultaneously occupy several centers of history. Now this is impossible, and if such persons ever tried to do this they would find out that it was impossible. Since they do not seem to be aware of this, the obvious conclusion is that they have never tried; and they have never tried because they do not believe it is necessary to approach this matter historically. The concepts of receiving

(1) Here we see the close affinity of the history of religions with the "philosophy of history"; and this again is a characteristic which it shares with "universal history".

group, problem, "re-enactment" etc, are foreign to the history of religions, just as they are to "universal history". Rather we have in both a strict subject-object epistemology whose scarcely disguised purpose is to control the material in order that it may serve the purpose of demonstrating the thesis of the particular history of religions. The value of the history of religions is the same as that of "universal history"; namely the collection of a large body of facts together with a commentary upon the facts which is often suggestive for genuine historical or theological work as the case may be. But in conclusion it must be emphasized that the assumptions and method of the history of religions are inappropriate to either history or theology, for the "category of 'beside one another' is a spatial not a temporal category".(1) (2)

Another approach to religion or theology which, in the form in which it has frequently been practiced in the past, must be judged largely a failure is the "philosophy of religion". The inadequacies of this discipline are very similar to those of the history of religions which we have just discussed. And indeed the history of religions is often treated within the context of the philosophy of religion.

It is notoriously difficult to define philosophy of religion, but a relatively recent definition of Austin Farrer's describes

(1) The Interpretation of History, p.251.

(2) Cf. Buber, Martin, Eclipse of God, Harper Torchbook Edition, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1957. pp.133-137.

the type of philosophy of religion which we have in mind. According to Farrer (who, it should be noted, is very critical of this conception of the philosophy of religion) the philosophy of religion takes the position that "certain types of human experience and human activity are accepted as occuring, and the philosopher's business is to extract from these the a priori principles or universal forms presumed to be embedded in them."(1) It is assumed here, as in the history of religions, that religious experience from diverse traditions can be more-or-less entered into and appropriated, although the philosopher stands within only one or even none of them. We have already stated the objections to this non-historical procedure. The philosopher of religion then goes on to the even more questionable process of extracting the kernel of meaning from the objects of his study, and thereby builds up a body of universal, a priori principles which can be applied to religion in general. The assumption that this is possible is basically the same assumption as that held by those engaged in "philosophy of history"; namely, the extraction from selected historical evidence of universal principles or "laws" which are then applied to all of history. The fallacy of this approach has been so amply demonstrated in the preceding pages that we need not repeat it here.

This leads us to discuss, finally, the more straightforward

(1) Farrer, A.M., Finite and Infinite, London, 1943, p.vii. Quoted by Gundry, D.W., in the Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 10. No. 2. p.115.

theological equivalent of the "philosophy of history", namely, the religious or theological "philosophy of history".(1) Here, just as in Marx or Toynbee, an ideal pattern is developed on the basis of a special interpretation of a certain limited selection of historical evidence; and then this pattern is imposed upon a wide sweep of empirical historical events, e.g., Augustine's heavenly and earthly cities; Joachim of Floris' three ages of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; the contemporary theory (if it may be given the dignity of a "theory") that God is on the side of Western, democratic capitalism etc.

A contemporary religious phenomenon which partakes both of this religious "philosophy of history" and also of the philosophy of religion, and which calls for more than passing notice, is that of Fundamentalism.(2) Fundamentalism establishes a number of a priori principles, the primary one being that Biblical statements are to be accepted as literal statements of objective fact. (This means that the Bible is looked upon and dealt with

(1) For the purposes of our discussion we have made a separation here between "philosophy of history" and religious "philosophy of history". However there is no genuinely non-religious "philosophy of history". This is so because the motivation of the "philosophy of history", namely to explain the meaning of history, is a religious motivation. The truly non-religious person is not interested in the meaning of history, and hence would have no cause to produce a "philosophy of history".

(2) The type of Fundamentalism which we have in mind here is the post-scientific, obscurantist variety which has grown up in the last hundred years or less. Its name and much of its character is derived from a series of tracts published in the United States early in the 20th Century and entitled "The Fundamentals".

as a chronicle.) This a priori principle is not derived from Scripture; rather, ironically enough, it owes its origin to the scientific point of view against which the Fundamentalists are rebelling; namely, that genuine reality consists of objective, observable facts. This point of view forms (or at least it did so in the period out of which Fundamentalism arose) an adequate basis for scientific experiment; but of course when it is transformed into an a priori principle of Biblical interpretation a confusion results which continues to burden the Church. All Biblical events must conform, however outrageous the results, to this principle; i.e., to this special way in which historical evidence must be read. In addition this a priori principle enables Biblical statements to be used in the most arbitrary way to explain, justify and predict contemporary events, e.g., the use made of Scripture by white supremacists in South Africa and the southern United States.

In discussing the theological equivalents of the "philosophy of history" we need to form an estimate of the extent to which the Old Testament is guilty of this practice. There are in the Old Testament many elements of the "philosophy of history". To begin with there is the determinative concept that Israel is God's covenanted people; a concept which is based upon a special interpretation of a limited selection of historical events (primarily the Exodus). Moreover this concept of a covenanted people affected not only the Jews and their history, for it

was through this special people that the gentiles were to find their fulfillment. All of history was seen in these terms, and the creation stories were rewritten in order that no part of "history" would be totally outside of this understanding.

This understanding was not invalidated by such empirical evidence as the failure of either party to this covenant to perform their covenanted responsibilities. God's failure to help them was regarded as chastisement. On man's side, however, the failure to obey the Law did lead to a modification of the covenant concept. The people of God ceased to be the whole Jewish nation, and became instead a "righteous remnant"; and in addition, the need for a Messiah came to be recognized by many.

The further point remains, and this is a cardinal error of any "philosophy of history"; Did the Jews impose their understanding as the exclusive interpretation of history in its entirety? They would undoubtedly have said: Yes, this is the interpretation of history. However, here an anachronistic note becomes evident in our reasoning; for in contrast to all modern "philosophies of history" there was no genuine history against which the Hebrew "philosophy of history" could arrogantly set itself in opposition. There was only chronicle and other "philosophies of history", such as that of the Greeks.
So we may say, and this applies equally to the New Testament, that in the Old Testament we have many of the

elements of the "philosophy of history"; but the historical context in which it was held makes it significantly different from the modern "philosophies of history" which we have discussed previously in this thesis. Nonetheless, at one point at least, we see the Jewish "philosophy of history" performing a disservice characteristic of all such schemes; for one of the important factors in the Jews rejection of Jesus as the Christ was the fact that there was no place in their "philosophy of history" for a crucified Messiah.

b. Re-enactment as a basis for history and theology.

In the preceding section we have shown why neither history nor theology can proceed on the basis of a strict subject-object epistemology, and we have discussed the types of false history and theology which arise when such a basis is used. It is now our task to describe the basis upon which genuine history and theology can be written, and to characterize the results which can be expected from this approach. This positive statement will serve a secondary purpose in strengthening our argument as to the inadequacy of the strict subject-object approach to history and theology.

Each of the men whom we have studied has examined and described the process by which a genuine knowledge of historical events can be achieved. Although the terminology has varied, this process has been essentially the same in each case; and

this is true in spite of the fact that some of the men have spoken as historians and others as theologians. We will call this process "re-enactment". It is only through a process of "re-enactment" that it is possible to arrive at a genuine knowledge of historical events. The definition of "re-enactment" in its simplest and least qualified form is: the process in which the contemporary historian or theologian on the basis of "pre-understanding" enters into the situation described in the pertinent documents; insofar as possible identifies himself with that situation, including its point of view and presuppositions; and under the strict control of the documents critically "re-enacts" and questions the events in order to find the answer to one or more questions about them. Now let us review the various ways in which this abstract and composite definition of "re-enactment" has been expressed.

It was Vico who first gave coherent and self-conscious expression to the process of "re-enactment", and saw its importance for history. Two of his most fundamental "axioms" state his position concisely in this matter. "The nature of things is nothing but their coming into being (nascimento) at certain times and in certain fashions."(1) This is again expressed from a slightly different angle in the words: "Doctrines must take their beginnings from (the beginnings) of the matter which they treat."(2) That is to say, if we are to

(1) The New Science, par. 147.
(2) The New Science, par. 314.

know the nature of a document or an event we are not merely to accept its content as a building stone which can be stacked up with other such stones to form history; rather we must study specifically and concretely the way in which that document or event came into being, i.e., it must be "re-enacted". The second "axiom" which we have quoted says this also, but rejects by implication the idea that this process of "re-enactment" of the original event can be short-circuited by appealing to the "authorities" on the subject we are studying. Vico goes on to elaborate this position by firmly maintaining (however deficient his practice) that this process of "re-enactment" of historical events (which he refers to as the factum) must at all times be guided by philosophy (the verum). By philosophy Vico meant, as did Croce and Collingwood after him, not a metaphysic but systematic and rational thought about historical event. This process of "re-enactment" is not emotional or mystical, but consistently rational. However uneven the results, this was the foundation of Vico's etymologizing; his reconstruction of the three ages of the Gods of the heroes and of men; his reconstruction of the "true Homer" etc. In the development of these two "axioms" we have a statement in its essential form of the process of "re-enactment" upon which genuine history and theology are based.

This same essential position is stated by Croce and Collingwood; the former, as we have seen, in rather elegant

terms, and the latter more matter-of-factly. Croce tells us that history is not the juggling of historical events which have been accepted from the "authorities" and affirmed as objects; rather it is the thoughtful "re-enactment" of specific, concrete events. (This "re-enactment" involves "pre-understanding" and the other factors discussed in the preceding section.) For example, it is only through the historical study or "re-enactment" of the process of thought in a specific document, e.g., Descartes' A Discourse on Method, that I come to know anything of the "universal" which Croce calls "truth".(1) In other instances it might be a painting, a treaty or an invasion which is "re-enacted" or recreated in the mind of the historian; and it is in this way that one comes to know something of "truth", "beauty", "goodness" or "utility"——Croce's four "universals"—— as the case may be. We are not interested in Croce's systematizing of the end product of this process into "universals", but we are interested in the process itself. This process is in every case an historical process in which the historian, on the basis of "pre-understanding" and membership in a receiving group, "re-enacts" or recreates a specific historical event in order to find the answer to certain questions which he has about that event. The genuinely real is that which is known in this way.

(1) Croce would not deny that this philosophical treatise exists as an object or thing; but as such it is valueless as a source of understanding or truth.

The implication of this understanding is that all history is contemporary history. The documents, paintings, archaelogical remains etc. with which the historian is concerned are a record of former life. The "spirit" of the historian, as Croce terms it, works upon the manifestation of life ~~of~~ these various records of past life found in records which are past manifestations of "spirit". In part the historian works in terms of logic and deductive thought; and in part in terms of intuition and imagination which he brings to bear upon the documents. Through this process the record of past life is "re-enacted"; it comes to life again in the life and mind of the historian; it becomes contemporary. History is this unity of the record of past life together with the critical thought of the historian in which the past comes alive and continues to live in the present. With the hope that we will be interpreted neither with undue literalism nor mystically, we would join Croce in saying that history is "knowledge of eternal present".(1)

Collingwood puts this same point of view in a more straightforward way. In an historical study of, again let us say Descartes' A Discourse on Method, the historian first of all identifies the problems which Descartes is trying to answer; he must think the problems out for himself, including the various possible solutions; and he must understand why the author chose the particular solution which is found in the

(1) Theory and History of Historiography, p.61. Italics Croce's.

document. This means rethinking, recreating or "re-enacting" the thought of the author after him. By this we do not mean that the emotions and related ideas which may have come to Descartes during the writing of A Discourse on Method can be recaptured. This is clearly impossible. But the thought insofar as it is recorded in the document can and must be rethought or "re-enacted". If for any reason we cannot "re-enact" an event or document from the past, then that event remains lodged in the past; non-contemporary and inaccessible. It is thus a "dark" event, and possibly part of a "dark age", i.e., an age so alien to our way of thinking that everything in it remains, to one degree or another, "dark". Here we see (as is commonly recognized) that not only is the life of a particular age conditioned by the limited or historically conditioned point of view of that age, but that also our own knowledge of that age (and hence its reality for us) is conditioned and limited by the point of view of our own time.

An integral part of this whole understanding of history originated by Vico and developed by Croce and Collingwood is that event and interpretation arise together. This statement is not to be perversely understood to mean that events exist solely in our minds. For example, Caesar's invasion of Britain could "exist" apart from any "re-enactment", interpretation and understanding of that event; say as an entry in the manu-

script of an ancient chronicler. But that "existence" is useless; it tells us nothing about Caesar, Rome, Britain, military history or anything else. We could not even defend the "existence" of this event against a sceptic except to say that some chronicler said it took place. It would be an utterly "dark" event.

The genuine, useful existence of an event arises with the "re-enactment", understanding and interpretation of that event; and in this "re-enactment" it takes its proper place in the coherent historical record. Now its existence can be a source of enlightenment, we can defend its existence, discuss its relevance to other events etc. "The nature of things [their "existence"] is nothing but their coming into being (nascimento) at certain times and in certain fashions." And implied in this statement is the necessity of knowing (understanding, interpreting) the time and fashion in which the "things" came into being. Apart from this knowing we do not know their nature, and consequently we cannot say anything useful about them. It is in this sense that we say event and the interpretation of that event arise together.

In the first part of this chapter we have shown the similarity between history and theology in regard to certain important but preliminary matters, e.g., "pre-understanding", receiving groups, the importance of the attitude of concern etc.

Then, in the immediately preceding paragraphs, we went on to describe the nature and role of "re-enactment" in historical investigation. This concise description has arisen out of our extensive examination of Vico, Croce and Collingwood in Part II; and the defense and elaboration of this description given in Part II need not be repeated here. Now we move on to the comparison of the nature and role of "re-enactment" in, respectively, history and theology. This is not, as before, a preliminary matter; but one which is absolutely fundamental to both. Regarding this, what do we find in theology; and especially in the theology of Bultmann and Tillich?

Bultmann asks us rhetorically; "Is not faith simply the hearing of Scripture as the Word of God?"(1) But how does the believer hear? This is not a rhetorical question, for there are a variety of possible answers constantly in use. These answers are of two major types. (Of course, a particular individual will not necessarily confine himself consistently to one type or the other). One type of answer grows out of the acceptance of the strict subject-object epistemology, and it results in "dictation" theories of Scripture, Fundamentalism (both Swiss and American varieties), proof texts, the acceptance of Scripture as containing propositional truth which can be applied directly to contemporary situations etc. None of the factors such as "pre-understanding" is of any use to the person who accepts this

(1) Kerygma and Myth, p.201.

type of answer to the question of how Scripture is heard as the Word of God.

The other type of answer is that, on the basis of "pre-understanding" and membership in a receiving group (in this case the Church), the hearer enters into a direct relationship with the events described in Scripture. He hears them as personal proclamation directed to him and calling for his obedient response. A specific problem of Scripture (e.g., Paul's "Who will save me...") which is described as Paul's problem is, through the process of "re-enactment", seen to be an "eternally present" problem; and more particularly, a problem for the hearer's own life. Through this process the hearer becomes identified with the author, and as a result Paul's answer (Jesus as the Christ) is no longer a formal, conceptual possibility but a living possibility. The hearer is brought within the power of the answer. And when his response to this powerful answer is one of faithful obedience, then the word of Scripture has brought forth the Word of God in that person's life.

It is <u>now</u> entirely in order if at this point the believer wishes to proceed to describe propositionally the answer which he has received. Indeed, if he is a theologian, he is bound to proceed to some extent in this way; as, for example, when we conceptualize the process of "re-enactment". There is no necessary antithesis between living ("re-enacted", existential)

and propositional knowledge of God, but there is a very serious question of priority between the two.

"Re-enactment" is not a quasi-biological process in which there is a development or unfolding of one's own inherent possibilities. In both history and theology "re-enactment" is always a response to and interaction with an event which is external to the historian or theologian. Further, this approach to knowledge is the very opposite of any subjectivism; for it tells us to look first of all outward to historical event, and not inwardly into our own minds. Of course the critical thought of the inquirer then enters into union with the event, but even here this "inward" element of the historian's or theologian's thought remains under the strict control of the event.

There is another sense, and one which is quite compatible with what we have just said, in which in "re-enactment" we do see an unfolding of innate human possibilities. For the historian these are the innate possibilities which belong to man as a rational being. For the theologian these are the innate possibilities which belong to man as being in the "image of God"; a concept which includes the idea of man being a rational being. However the decisive factor which enables the possibilities of being in the "image of God" to come to expression, which enables the Word of God to appear in our lives, is not innate but comes from God who has spoken to us in Jesus Christ. It

is this concrete act apprehended through "re-enactment" and responded to in faithful obedience which enables us to realize the human "possibility"——if we may now express it so——of escaping from our self-centeredness and pride and being conformed to Christ.

In our discussion of Tillich we have seen this same understanding of faith described in terms of "fate and freedom". By "fate" is meant that in the process of "re-enactment" I understand my historical fate to be connected with the historical fate of Jesus Christ; that my historical fate of being the person I am is related to and finds its meaning in the historical fate which is described in the New Testament——the kerygma. By "freedom" is meant that through the process of "re-enactment" I decide freely to respond in obedience to the fate of Jesus Christ as described in the New Testament. The recognition of the event of Jesus Christ as the sign-event, the saving event for my life cannot take place apart from my free decision to respond to that event. Jesus as the Christ is not an "object"; he does not exist as saving event (as miracle) apart from my free response to him. Sign-event and faith in that sign-event arise together. And on the level of functional description this process corresponds exactly to the fact that for the historian event and interpretation arise together, i.e., until the historian has "re-enacted" an event, and out of his freedom made

a decision about the meaning of that event, until this has happened that event does not exist as a meaningful, valuable, enlightening historical fact. Event and interpretation arise together.

This understanding of "re-enactment", faith and sign-event (miracle) applies not only to Jesus Christ, but also to sign-events as a whole. Our whole position commits us to the view that in every case sign-event and faith arise together. It is true that in the New Testament the sign-events performed by Jesus were, in accordance with the general belief of the time, sometimes accepted apart from faith in Jesus as the acts of a "wonder worker". (Even here there was a distorted kind of faith at work; the event is seen or interpreted as "wonder".) However the sign-events were never accepted as Jesus wished them to be accepted (i.e., as signs pointing to the Father) apart from faith in Jesus. Once again this is to say, in opposition to much talk about miracles, that miracle or sign-event cannot be known and used objectively as props for our faith; but can only be known as one responds in faithful obedience to "the proclaiming, accosting, demanding, and promising word of preaching".(1)

What is the part of the Holy Spirit in this? It is from beginning to end the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is He who leads us to Christ; and what we have done here is to describe concretely the way in which He leads men to Christ.

(1) As always we are interpreting Bultmann's characteristic word "preaching" as including Scripture, preaching, sacraments etc.

The Holy Spirit is not more real, as some people astoundingly seem to believe, when its work is described abstractly, i.e., when the work of the Holy Spirit is abstracted from the historical means such as 'pre-understanding' and "re-enactment" which He uses to effect His purposes in human life. Nor are these abstractions any less abstract when they are couched in pious language. The Holy Spirit is at work in the Church; and more specifically and concretely this means He is at work in the proclamation, in the whole process of 'pre-understanding' and "re-enactment", and in the response of faithful obedience in which historical event is affirmed as sign-event. In this Spirit-directed process the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are seen to be ever present realities; realities which are and must be created anew again and again in the life of the contemporary believer. This is and has always been a characteristic of faith in the Christ. And because this is so we can say that this "always new", this "always contemporary" quality of faith in Christ is one important aspect of its being always the same "yesterday, today and forever". If this were not the case, if the Christ did not again and again become a living reality within our lives, then we would have to say that Jesus Christ is "ever more remote" from the contemporary experience of the Christian people.

It must be this Spirit-directed process of "re-enactment", in which Scripture becomes the Word of God for us, that Calvin and others refer to when they speak of Scripture as being "self-authenticating".(1) Now there is obviously no such thing as

(1) Cf. Calvin, John, Institutes, I.7. par. 5.

a self-authenticating statement; but a statement can be theologically authenticated when the Holy Spirit works in conjunction with Scripture in the process of "re-enactment". If this is what is meant in such statements, then "Spirit-authenticating" would be a better phrase than the very misleading one which is more commonly used. But be this as it may, it is just this process of Spirit-authentication which does take place when the words of Scripture are received as the Word of God. On the historical side the analogue of this is the "interior verification" which Croce speaks of.(1) This is the verification of the document which takes place when the historian critically "re-enacts" the thought of that document, and finds it to be true.

If this is the work of the Holy Spirit in "re-enactment" and in the receiving of Jesus the Christ, then when is this work of the Holy Spirit stifled? It is stifled whenever we do not listen attentively to the problem posed in the proclamation; and this includes most especially a translation of that problem into its contemporary terms. It is stifled whenever our thinking is not controlled by the documents (Holy Scripture); and this includes letting them control the use we make of customs and traditions ancient and modern. It is stifled whenever we uncritically let some "orthodoxy" become an authority for us;

(1) Cf. Croce, p. 177 supra.

and whenever we follow a strict subject-object epistemology and thereby come to regard the documents as a "source" of doctrines and miracles which can be used objectively as supports for our faith and as weapons against the unfaith of others. In all of these ill-founded attempts we see the notes of detachment and analysis characteristic of what Tillich has called "controlling knowledge"; and this points to the unconscious intention of this Spirit-stifling attitude which is——albeit in the name of God——to control God. We have opposed to this an attitude in which the notes of detachment and analysis are present but not dominant; an attitude which sees the process of "re-enactment" as the means of approach to Scripture, and which contains as the predominant notes those of participation, understanding and the expectation of receiving.

We have spoken of the process of "re-enactment" as the means whereby Holy Scripture is received as the Word of God. This is dependent revelation. As we stated in the first part of this chapter, dependent revelation is dependent upon the original revelation received by the prophets or apostles and recorded in Scripture. Dependent revelation is different from original revelation in that the contemporary believer in contrast to the prophets or apostles brings a different world-view and hence a modified "pre-understanding" to the revelation. It is also different in that, for example, he receives not simply Jesus the Christ, but Jesus the Christ-

as-received-by-the-apostles. This fact introduces a whole series of factors into the receiving of the revelation which were not originally present.

On the other hand there are many similarities in the way in which dependent and original revelation is received; and these similarities far overshadow the differences. We could state this similarity in summary form by saying that the process of "re-enactment" is essentially the same for the apostles and for the contemporary believer. This means, more particularly, that in both it is directed by the Spirit and its locus is the Church; and that in both the factors of "pre-understanding", hearing and the decision to obedience play their essential part. It is the same in both because the apostles also brought a "pre-understanding" to the encounter with the Christ; they too lived in a community of concern (the Jewish people) which had its particular problems; and they too (and above all Peter) could no more than ourselves accept the words and acts of Jesus as self-evident blocks of divine truth out of which a faith could be built. In short, they too participated in the same essential process of "re-enactment" in order that Jesus of Nazareth might become for them the Christ. For the apostles the three year ministry must have been just this process, and including many failures (e.g., requests for precedence in the

Kingdom of God) and some success (e.g. the Transfiguration). It was of course only with Easter and the coming of the Holy Spirit that the process of "re-enactment" was brought to the point where a genuine decision of obedience to the Christ could be made; Jesus of Nazareth was then received in faith as the Christ.

We have spoken of the relevance of "re-enactment" for the dependent revelation which we receive, and for the original revelation which was received by the apostles and others. It now only remains to say that this whole understanding which we have developed here is, insofar as it is true, an <u>incomplete but nevertheless significant</u> description of the manner in which Jesus was in relationship with the Father. To deny this is the deny that Jesus was truly man. It <u>is</u> an incomplete description because we do not know just how Jesus' being truly God modifies the truly human relationship which existed between himself and the Father (Christ's perfect obedience would be one very significant modification). However we can say this much, that whatever unique factors existed in this relationship, they did not destroy or bypass his <u>human</u> relationship with the Father. If one was to maintain the contrary it would amount to saying that Christ's two natures were separate and distinct; a position which is denied to us by the mainstream of Christian theology. Consequently it would seem true to say

that Jesus' relationship to the Father was one which bears some positive affinity to the relationship which exists between man and God; a relationship which we have described here in terms of Spirit-directed "re-enactment".

History and the Holy Spirit. We have insisted upon the many parallels both as to method and content between historical and theological "re-enactment"; and upon the essential part played by the Holy Spirit in the latter. This raises the question: Can we say that the working of the Holy Spirit in theological "re-enactment" is paralleled by a similar working of the Holy Spirit in historical "re-enactment"? If we deny this similarity then we are saying that insofar as truth is achieved by the historical process, it is achieved without the Holy Spirit. It would follow from this that the "spirit of truth" is only the spirit of certain kinds of truth; and this would be presumably the "religious" truth which is to be found in a "holy history" which exists without an organic connection with all other truth and history. In fact the existence of a separate "religious" truth is the necessary basis for a distinct "holy history" which is conceived of as being separate from all other history, although the two are adjacent in time and space. We have previously stated our reasons for rejecting any such radical separation of general and religious knowledge.(1)

(1) see supra, pp. 410ff.

The Holy Spirit *is* at work in both historical and theological "re-enactment". We will return to this in the concluding section of this chapter. At this point we only wish to establish that the Holy Spirit has a different task in history and in theology. A suggestive way of expressing this difference is to say that it is not the task of the Holy Spirit in historical "re-enactment" to lead us to Christ (the *Logos*), but only to the truth (the *logos*). Similarly, in theological "re-enactment" we are led to Christ (the *Logos*), but not the truth (the *logos*) about Caesar's invasion of Britain or the cause of the French Revolution. Theological "re-enactment" leads to the *Logos* and not the *logos* because it brings to its task the particular "pre-understanding" which has arisen out of man's age-long relationship with God; and, secondly, because it directs its attention primarily to those documents (Holy Scripture) which describe the particular events in and through which God has chosen to reveal himself to man fully and concretely. In *this* Spirit-directed inquiry the *logos* is the *Logos*; the truth is the Christ.

There is a second difference which we can point to when we are comparing the role of the Holy Spirit in historical and theological "re-enactment". This difference lies in the fact that in theological "re-enactment" (and in contrast to historical "re-enactment") when we wish to decide whether or not the

Holy Spirit is at work in some particular event or events, we have a specific and concrete criterion to appeal to. This criterion is Jesus the Christ. This criterion is not, in practice, sufficient to resolve all problems as to the presence of the Spirit——as the existence of the divisions of the Church bears vivid testimony. However, in historical "re-enactment" there is no one concrete criterion to which one can appeal; the logos does not have one but many embodiments. Thus in the case of two quite opposed interpretations of the French Revolution there is no independent criterion to which one can turn for help; rather, if one interpretation is to be judged to be a better expression of the truth of the situation, then this judgment must be based solely upon the historical integrity of the preferred account.

The Holy Spirit, then, is operative in both historical and theological "re-enactment"; but it is operative in the distinctive ways we have described.

3. Historical Knowledge as the Only Approach to God.

The basis of historical and theological knowledge is "re-enactment". If we accept this, then the question presents itself: Just what is it which permits itself to be the subject of "re-enactment"? Vico has given us a concise answer to this question in the formula: verum et factum convertuntur, i.e., the condition of knowing truth (verum) is that the knower should have created it (factum). This, of course, does not mean that I can only know those things which are my own personal and original creations. Rather it is meant that the condition of knowing anything is that mankind has created it (e.g., as Euclid has created Euclidean geometry), and that I personally am able to recreate or "re-enact" that creation. Since it has been created by man once, so it can subsequently be recreated by man. Therefore, that which lends itself to "re-enactment" is the entire cultural residuum; all that man has made; all of history. And it is through the "re-enactment" of specific examples of what man has made that we come to know its nature; that we come to know the truth expressed in that specific creation, as well as the truth about man who has created it.

In Croce this same basic idea is greatly elaborated. He speaks of the human "spirit" which comes to know and develop itself as it investigates specific, concrete acts of thought,

e.g., a painting, treaty, philosophical treatise etc. This process by which "acts of thought" are investigated and the "spirit" comes to know itself is the process of "re-enactment". For Croce this process is the historical process, and as such it is identified with philosophy. (By "philosophy" Croce does not mean a metaphysic but a methodology; namely, just this historical process of "re-enactment").

The implication of this position is that reality cannot be known in its essence alone, but only in its embodiment in "the entire wealth of the developed form".(1) The study of "the entire wealth of the developed form" (the factum) is history; it is the study of "spirit" in its particular, concrete manifestations. For Croce this process of thought thinking history is the only conceivable source of value (meaningfulness, usefulness, truth about reality) for the human enterprise.(2) (3)

Man only knows that which he has made. This is the position which our historians have established for us in the realm of history. Is it possible to maintain the same position in theology and say: Man's only knowledge of God is discovered in that which man has made? The answer which we give to this question will depend upon our view of man, history and the created order in general. (For, as we said in the Introduction, the understanding which we have of history has implications which reach out into

(1) see p. 158 supra.

(2) see pp. 159ff. supra.

(3) Collingwood is not included in this review as, on this point he does not contribute anything beyond that which is stated by Vico and Croce.

the totality of Christian doctrine). Obviously, if our view of man, history and the created order is one which assumes that it is more or less alien to God; or, to put it the other way around, if our doctrine of God is such that it assumes that man, history and the created order is alien to Him; if this is so, then it would be necessary to reject the position which we will maintain here. This position is: Our only knowledge of God is discovered in that which man has made. We will develop this position, and then proceed to state the understanding of the created order upon which this position rests.

Our only knowledge of God is discovered in that which man has made. This is a less ambiguous statement of what is meant when it is said that Judaism and Christianity are historical religions; or that our knowledge of God (the content of revelation) is historically given. Our knowledge of God arises out of our "re-enactment" of the human acts and words; primarily those recorded in the Old and New Testaments, and especially out of the acts and words of the prophets and Jesus Christ. Whatever else we may want to say about these acts and words, they <u>are</u> the actions and words of men taking place in time and space. They are not, in any ordinary sense, <u>causally</u> related to God or any other transcendent source; anymore than the world as a whole is causally related to God (the cosmological argument). In saying this we are accepting unconditionally the seriousness of our concrete situation in time.

As a part of this same unconditional acceptance we agree with Bultmann when he says: "I am interpreting theological affirmations as assertions about human life."(1) By this it is not meant that we are to rest content in a self-sufficient finitude or "naturalism" which is satisfied to make assertions only about human life. Rather these affirmations are theological affirmations; God is to be discovered in human life. Through the process of "re-enactment" which we have described we respond in faithful obedience and affirm that in these assertions about human life God is revealed; and supremely this is so in our assertions about the human life of Jesus of Nazareth.

It needs to be made very clear at this point that we are not saying that God is related to these human, historical events which form the basis of theological affirmation as cause is related to effect. The eternal is not the cause of finite acts and words. Rather we are saying that it is in, and only in, these acts and words that God is discovered; these acts and words are sign-events which point to God. The transcendent is immanent in human history. The support for this position is, and can only be, the conviction which I share with the Church that in the "re-enactment" of the historical events recorded in Scripture we are pointed toward and put in relationship with God; that his Holy Spirit comes to dwell within us, and we are led to do his will. It is in this sense that it can be said that God is

(1) Kerygma and Myth, p.107. Cf. Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, I, p.266.

"at work in history". In this sense too we may say that God is a causal factor in history; but never in any "supernatural" sense which would circumvent the historical process and human "re-enactment"; never in the sense of divine fiat interfering with the natural and historical process. In all this we see that the traditionally understood concepts of "natural" and "supernatural", in their application to the problems of religious knowledge at least, are misleading.

In his recent Problems of Religious Knowledge Peter Munz expresses, although in a very different terminology from our own, a point of view which has many points of similarity with that which we have been advocating in the preceding pages. Freely borrowing from Munz's terminology, it might be helpful to restate briefly our own position in the following way.(1) The subject matter of Christian theology is and can only be certain specific events in space and time which have been received and continue to be received through the process of theological "re-enactment". These events (e.g., Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ) are not "supernatural", if by that is meant that they are "caused" by God's fiat; nor are they "natural", if by that is meant that they are looked upon strictly as empirical events in space and time. Rather, they are empirical events perceived in a

(1) Munz, Peter, Problems of Religious Knowledge, SCM Press, London, 1959, Ch.XII et passim. Our statement here does not pretend to describe Munz's point of view; it is simply a borrowing of some of his terminology in order to clarify our own position.

special way, i.e., by a receiving group (the Church) which, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, brings its "pre-understanding" to bear upon the empirical events in question. In Munz's terms, an event so perceived is a "symbol"; and the symbol, in contrast to the empirical historical reality which gave rise to the symbol, is made by man. Such a symbol neither "stands for" God, nor is it a propositional statement about God. Rather, the symbol points us toward Him. The content of revelation is human, critical, historical——or simply, theological——thought about these symbols.

Thus we are in agreement with the historians to the extent that we believe that all knowledge, including our knowledge of God, depends upon historical experience. And if we agree with them in this, then we are further bound to agree with them that all of our knowledge is historically conditioned. Historical knowledge is the daughter of a specific historical time; it shows the limitations of its time. And if a new time brings forth new knowledge, then with it come new limitations. Historical knowledge never gives us absolute knowledge. This is true of all of our knowledge of God, both as that is experienced by the Church and by the individual Christian. In the Church the revelation to Moses was succeeded by the revelation to the prophets; and this in turn was followed by the revelation in Christ, which will in turn be succeeded when we "meet God face to face". The Church is "being on the way", as is also the individual Christian who is constantly presented with the possibility in his own historical experience of the Holy Spirit opening to him further "dependent" revelations of God. "The past

from which every present springs is not a determining past, but a past offering to the present the problems which demand solution or development."(1)

This reminds us of the idea expressed throughout the three historians whom we have studied, and which found it most developed expression in Croce; namely, that history is the process in which the human "spirit" moves toward an ever fuller realization of its nature. Concerning this, and from a theological point of view, we may say that history is the process in which God's Holy Spirit has moved toward an ever fuller manifestation of its nature. The Holy Spirit which "spoke by the prophets" is the same Spirit which Jesus reveals to us as "Comforter". Yet what a different Spirit the one is from the other! The Holy Spirit too has progressively manifested itself in history.

Some will wish to emphasize at this point that the imperfect Spirit manifested in the prophets is the same Spirit revealed to us through Jesus Christ; and that our conception of the Godhead is such that we are bound to believe that the Holy Spirit as such was always the same, i.e., eternally perfect. We would tentatively agree with this statement, but at the same time we would wish to emphasize in turn that here we need to be reminded of two things. First, and more obviously, this statement about the nature of the Holy Spirit is an historically based and conditioned statement. Secondly, and less obviously, statements about the Holy Spirit being "always the same" are not the straightforward assertions which

(1) History and Eschatology, p.138.

they are usually taken to be. We cannot speak objectively and straightforwardly of the nature of the Holy Spirit, as we can of the nature of the carbon atom, as having been "always the same". As applied to the Holy Spirit "always the same" is used to suggest such notions as "perfectness". And while it is beyond the scope of this thesis to enter into a description of the Godhead, we would suggest the development of the idea of "always the same" in terms of a static perfection is open to question.(1)

In our examination of Croce we found him saying, in connection with the development of "spirit" in history, that revelation "is that which thought gives to thought by means of criticism".(2) Or to express it more straightforwardly: "The only revelation is that which arises in the mind of the historian in the process of critical thought."; and for Croce critical thought has as its basis the "re-enactment" of concrete events. He conceived of this statement as a radical secularization of

(1) Cf. Berdyaev, Nicolas, The Meaning of History, Geoffrey Bles London, 1936, Ch. 3 et passim. "But I am deeply convinced that the Christian doctrine of the immobility and inertia of God and the Absolute, and of the effectiveness of the historical principle only in the created and relative world that differs essentially from the Absolute, is a purely exoteric and superficial doctrine." (p.47) "The usual philosophical objections to the possibility of movement in the interior depths of the Absolute is a formalist and rationalistic one. It reduced itself to the argument that such an assumption is irreconcilable with divine perfection, since all movement, destiny and history postulate an insufficiency and, hence, an imperfection." (p.50). Cf. also Whitehouse, W.A., Order, Goodness, Glory, Oxford University Press, London, 1960, pp.52-53.

(2) History as the Story of Liberty, p.67.

the concept of revelation. Neverless it is a satisfactory statement of what goes on in the process of Christian revelation. For revelation is apprehended, received or arises in the mind of the believer through the process of "re-enactment" (which includes critical thought) of concrete events, e.g., the Exodus, the words of Isaiah, the person of Jesus the Christ etc. (The use of the phrase "arises in the mind" no more denies an objective correlative to Christian revelation than it denies a similar correlative when the revelation of beauty arises in the mind of the historian studying a Rembrandt painting.) On a strictly functional level Croce's description here is perfectly identical with the process of Christian revelation. The distinction between Croce and the Christian lies in the content. The first difference in content is that for the Christian it is not only the human "spirit" which is manifested in human thought about concrete events, but also the Holy Spirit. The second difference lies in the fact that for the Christian the process of "re-enactment" of historical events not only reveals their nature as beauty, truth, goodness or utility (Croce's position); but that this process, when used theologically, also has the ability to reveal the nature of certain events as sign-events directing us to God. In this we are not denying or saying anything less than Croce and the other historians have said; rather we are saying something more. This "something more" is the assertion that

concrete events in their place in nature and history can have a transcendent reference; that they can point to God.

The whole presupposition of this position on both its historical and theological sides is that the nature or essence of anything on the one hand, and its historical manifestation on the other hand, are not separate. The historical manifestation when it is historically apprehended has the power to reveal the nature of anything——insofar as that nature can be known. Beauty in itself and the beauty of a Rembrandt self-portrait are not separate; rather they are the same. Beauty is not known save in its manifestation in specific works of art. In like manner, the nature of the Son of God is not different from the historical manifestation of the Son in Jesus of Nazareth. Insofar as we know the Son, we know Him in this Jesus. The process by which we know anything begins with the apprehension of it in its historical manifestation.

Tillich's statement of this position, common to all five of the men whom we have studied, will serve as an excellent summary. He expresses it by saying that the logos (the idea) can only be grasped in terms of specific historical events; and the particular manifestation of a particular idea he terms the Kairos of the idea, of the logos. For example, Hegel's philosophy is the Kairos (and in this case, the Kairos) of German Idealism. It was the historical fate of German Idealism to be expressed by Hegel; that fate is not alien to it, but rather it is through the study of the fate, the Kairos of German Idealism that we come to know what it is. "Recognizing reality is

recognizing reality as it stands in ~~its~~ the historical fate, not beyond it...The participation of the things [the Kairoi] in the idea [the logos] corresponds just as seriously to the participation of the idea in the things."(1) Tillich's formula for this position, a position which each of the five men we have studied has expressed in his own words, is: "The Kairos determines the Logos".(2) (3)

Moreover, the logos considered as something independent of any Kairos, the logos above fate, is not a possible subject of either historical or theological inquiry. Any discussion of history must be, at least by implication, a discussion of particular historical events; and any discussion of God must be based upon particular historical revelations of God's nature and will. It is for this reason that theological affirmations are first of all assertions about human life, i.e., assertions about specific, human, historically conditioned Kairoi which are expressions of the Logos. Above all, theological affirmation is an assertion about one particular human life, one particular Kairos, Jesus as the Christ.

At this point it should become clear that the central problem of history and the central problem of theology are the

(1) The Interpretation of History, p.164.

(2) Ibid., p.135.

(3) Cf. Marsh's expression "The Order of Knowing certainly is from the historical to the eternal..." Marsh, op. cit., p.147.

same problem. The central problem of history centers around the interpretation of historical event: is it opaque, or can it be an expression of meaning?; is it irretrievably in the past, or can it become a living part of contemporary experience?; is it an expression of the really real (genuine historical truth), or does reality have a separate existence "above" the event?; if reality (the logos; historical truth) is joined with historical event, what is the nature of this union? etc. These problems have been dealt with at length. We have seen that they are also the central problems of theology. For the theologian the central problem is the interpretation of historical event, and especially the event of Jesus Christ: is that event opaque, or can it become the expression of meaning——and if so, what meaning?; is it irretrievably in the past and capable of being expressed only statically and propositionally, or can it become a living part of contemporary experience?; is this event an expression of the really real (the Logos), or does reality have a separate existence "above" the event?; if reality (the Logos) is joined with historical event, what is the nature of this union? etc. Thus the historian and the theologian speak of the same problems, and they speak of them in much the same way. The difference is not that the theologian says less or denies anything that the historian says; rather, he is saying more. He is saying that the reality which finds expression in historical event also

includes the eternal Logos, God. And he is enabled to say this because the Holy Spirit reveals an historical event to be a sign-event.

This last matter certainly, at least as far as explicit intention is concerned, forms a distinction between history and theology. Only theology is explicitly concerned with the revelation of God within the historical order. However, we have seen that Tillich maintains that the historical and theological (and especially Christological) questions have, beyond the methodological similarity just discussed, a further similarity. And this second similarity raises the question as to whether or not the distinction which we have just made between the historical and theological inquiries is really a radical one. Tillich's statement of this second similarity can be expressed in the following way.

First of all, both history and Christian (and Hebrew) theology have as an important part of their purpose the discerning of meaning in history. As we have said several times, this purpose is a distinctively Hebrew-Christian one; and no one would deny (however diverse his formulation of the answer) that the discerning of meaning in history is one of the legitimate purposes of theology. Nor would any of the historians whom we have studied deny that the discovery of meaning in history (however different this meaning might be from that for which the

theologian searches) is the purpose of historical inquiry. This raises the question as to whether or not the distinctively Hebrew-Christian concern for the discovery of meaning in history has not insinuated itself into the historical inquiry? (Here we need to remember that there is no genuine inquiry into the meaning of history in pre-Christian times.) And indeed we have already quoted Collingwood to the effect that the specific interests of history, and all other inquiries too, have their origin in, and have been isolated from, the realm of theology.(1)

Secondly, as we have seen, Tillich says that history and theology (and especially Christology) seek "to describe the concrete point at which something absolute appears in history and provides it with meaning and purpose".(2) This is obviously true of theology; and as far as the "philosophy of history" is concerned it is also obviously true. The "philosophy of history" seeks to describe a concrete manifestation of meaning in history which gives meaning and purpose to the whole of history, e.g., Vico's "ideal and eternal history", the Enlightenment, Hegel's Prussian state, Marx's classless society etc. The direct and heavy indebtedness of the "philosophy of history" upon orthodox Christian theology is so obvious, and has been so widely discussed in recent literature, that we need not enter upon it here. However, as we have stressed, the "philosophy of history" proceeds upon assumptions which always lead to a distortion of historical evidence.

(1) see p.409 supra.
(2) The Interpretation of History, p.243.

The question remains, then, is the description of "the concrete point at which something absolute appears in history" also a concern of genuine history as it is of genuine theology? Tillich's answer to this question is affirmative, although he admits that: "This problem can be obscured by leaving that concrete point in history unnamed or rendering it invisible by general abstract formulations. But the problem cannot be escaped, for history becomes history only through its relation to such a concrete point by which it gains meaning."(1)

How does this statement apply to each of the three historians whom we have studied? All three agree with Tillich that the meaning must be concrete; but at what point or in what specific form does that meaning appear? Vico developes a "civil theology of divine providence" which reveals an "ideal and eternal history"; and it is this "ideal and eternal history" which provides history with its meaning. This is an explicit attempt to describe a diffuse but nevertheless concrete absolute which has appeared in history and which gives meaning to all of history. However we have seen that this attempt, for all of its greatness, was involved in the serious shortcomings of the "philosophy of history".

Collingwood, whose work is the least pretentious of our three historians, leaves the meaning-giving event of history unnamed. He states emphatically that the source of meaning must

(1) The Interpretation of History p.243.

not come from beyond history, but must be concretely historical; he sets forth a method ("re-enactment") by which any such event would have to be approached; he says history is "'for' human self-knowledge", and that this arises out of the historical study of human acts; and he indicates (no more) that religion enters into this somehow. But he does not identify or explain how "human acts" correctly understood provide history with meaning and purpose, although his assumption is that history does have meaning and purpose. If he had been pressed upon this point he would probably have said that the most he could say as a historian is that events provide their own meaning and purpose. But here we are back to the idea, which we found so unsatisfactory at an earlier point in our discussion, of statements or events which authenticate or give value to themselves! In short, for Collingwood history has meaning and purpose, but the source of that meaning (assuming that we cannot accept self-meaning-giving events) remains unnamed.

The position taken by Croce is, although expressed much more elaborately, essentially that of Collingwood. For Croce value in history arises through the "re-enactment" of historical events, and by this process of "re-enactment" "spirit" is developed and comes to know itself as "spirit". The value which arises out of this process can be categorized as beauty, truth

goodness and utility. The value expressed in these four categories is its own meaning and purpose; there is no need for any other. Thus, for example, the value of the beauty discovered in paintings by Rembrandt is self-validating. This is not finally satisfactory, although it is adequate as a basis for a great deal of creative work in history and all of its ramifications. Croce would undoubtedly have replied to this criticism that it is satisfactory for him, and in any case there is no other source of value. However we are left with the strong suspicion that the historical source of meaning and purpose in history has been rendered "invisible by general abstract formulations".

Tillich, Croce and Collingwood are agreed[1] as to the form which meaning and purpose in history must take: a concrete event historically perceived. However, they do not agree, and here the divergence is sharpest between Tillich and Croce, as to just what that event is. For Croce it is the whole gamut of event which have been historically perceived, i.e., the events containing their own meaning and purpose. It is difficult to see that this gives meaning to history, and the many philosophers and historians who would disagree with Croce on this point does not render

(1) Vico and Bultmann are agreed in this matter too, but the matter is posed more explicitly in Tillich, Croce and Collingwood; and hence we are discussing it in terms of these latter three men.

our difficulty any easier. Yet Croce does proceed with the conviction that there is meaning and purpose in history, that in it we see the development of "spirit", that it is the story of liberty etc. It is this which leaves us with the strong suspicion that for Croce there is "something" in history which enables it to have the meaning Croce declares it to have, and yet which remains unnamed. We are left with the suspicion that Croce wishes to have the complete freedom of the autonomous historian, and at the same time to avail himself of a meaning and purpose in history which that autonomous history cannot provide; that he wishes to eat his cake and have it too.

Tillich, on the other hand, says that the meaning-giving center of history is the event of Jesus the Christ; and that this event constitutes history's meaning and purpose. This center is absolute, and through the process of "re-enactment" it is affirmed as a living reality within the context of contemporary life. Admittedly, this affirmation is a decision in faith about an event, Jesus the Christ, which is historical and therefore ambiguous; and because it is ambiguous it has received other and non-Christian interpretations. But this is the nature of all historical knowledge that it does not provide us with absolute, self-authenticating knowledge. Croce's affirmation that history is history of the "spirit" is an affirmation about ambiguous historical evidence which has received many other

interpretations. Thus, in the end, we see that it is on the basis of faith and decision that any affirmation is made that history is the history of the victory of meaningfulness over meaninglessness; that history is affirmed as the history of salvation. Here again the problem of meaning in history and the Christological problem are seen to converge.

Christology today cannot be conducted exclusively or even primarily in terms of the traditional discussion of the two natures. Rather, we must first of all approach the event of Jesus Christ in full seriousness as an historical event taking place in time and space. Christians are quite willing verbally to accept this event in this way, but significantly they are not willing to accept the consequences which come with this acceptance. These consequences can be stated in the following way. First, it means to give up the notion of God interfering with the natural and historical process; or of God "causing" the Incarnation, where "cause" is used in any straightforward and ordinary sense. Secondly, it means to recognize that the event of Jesus as the Christ is, like all historical events, ambiguous; and that therefore Jesus Christ cannot be set up as an objective support for faith, but can only be affirmed in faith and decision. As in history, there are no objective, uninterpreted facts. Thirdly, and closely related to what we have just said, the event of Jesus Christ must be approached by the whole process of historical understanding which we have referred to as "re-

enactment". And fourthly, the Christology which is built up in this way is seen to be not a special, esoteric knowledge growing out of a special "holy history", but that at many points it is seen to be an integral part of human knowledge as a whole. As Jesus Christ points us uniquely to the divine Logos, so human knowledge as a whole can be affirmed in faith (as in the historians whom we have studied) as pointing to the logos. And this logos, be it beauty, truth, goodness or utility (to use Croce's terminology) is not foreign to the Logos. It follows from this that the knowledge given to us in the event of Jesus Christ speaks to us not only about God, but also of history as a whole of which this event is itself a part. Jesus the Christ, the Logos, is the center of history in which all partial meanings (all individual revelations of beauty, goodness, truth and utility) find their basis and perfection. If, for example, history is affirmed in faith to be the story of liberty (Imagine any historian outside of the Hebrew-Christian tradition making this statement!), then this is possible finally because of the possibility of liberty which is revealed and given to us again and again in the Spirit-directed "re-enactment" of the event of Jesus Christ.

This position raises one fundamental problem; namely, it looks disquietingly like "philosophy of history". True, it does not find a principle of interpretation outside of history,

and then impose it upon history. No, this center of history arises within history itself. Nevertheless, this center of history does have a transcendent reference which lies outside of history; and in any case one particular event in history becomes in some sense determinative for the whole of history.

But in what sense is it determinative? This is the crucial question. As we have demonstrated, the fundamental error of the "philosophy of history" is that it tailors historical evidence in order that it may conform to the selected center or principle of interpretation. If, for example, following Toynbee, we say that civilization follows a characteristic cycle of emergence, growth, levelling off and decline; then necessarily we have a scheme into which, with more or less violence, historical evidence must be made to fit. However, the affirmation that Jesus the Christ is the event which gives meaning and purpose to history does not provide a basis for selecting or prejudging historical evidence. Church-centered events are not necessarily more religiously significant than political or economic events, and may indeed be much less so. Moreover, there is no one interpretation of any particular historical event(s) which can be called "religious" or "Christian", i.e., there is no Christian economics, politics, aesthetics etc. Nor does the position which we are maintaining here even pre-judge what the historian as historian shall say about the meaning-giving event of Jesus

Christ, i.e., if the historian can establish any new fact, however embarassing for Christian belief, that fact must be accepted and dealt with.(1) The Christian is not afraid that the logos of truth which the historian explicitly seeks is at variance with the Logos who is the truth. The autonomy of history is not threatened by the position we are maintaining. In the realm of time and space——in the realm of history—— there is no unconditional reality which can be heteronomously(2) imposed upon the autonomy of reason. Neither a "philosophy of history", nor a philosophical method, nor a theology can be idolatrously identified with definitive or final truth. And it is just this idolatrous claim which has evoked a vehement protest from the historians whom we have studied; a struggle which, in Tillich's terms, is an expression of the age-long struggle between autonomy and heteronomy.

Yet, one more thing must be said about "philosophy of history". It explicitly recognizes, as autonomous history does not, that individual historical meanings are not enough. It is not enough to be concerned just with the beauty of a particular painting, the truth of a particular treatise, the utility of a particular social system etc. Even when these individual meanings are organised, as in Croce, into an interconnected aggregate it is still insufficient. The "philosophy of history" wishes to find a meaning for history which will provide an illuminating

(1) Cf. Roberts, T.A., History and Christian Apologetic, S.P.C.K London, 1960, pp.148-149 et passim.

(2) heteros (strange) + nomos (law). See our discussion of this term, pp.394ff. supra.

context for all of the individual meanings in history. After all, we would find it incredible that Marx, Spengler, Toynbee and all of the other distinguished men who have written "philosophy of history" were engaged in an enterprise which was without any valid motivation. The difficulty, as we have conclusively shown, is that their attempt to supply meaning for history is one which leads inevitably to the falsification of historical evidence and an heteronomous incursion upon the autonomy of historical study.

At this point that which is needed becomes obvious. The insight of the "philosophy of history" that there be a determinative meaning for history needs to be united with the insight of autonomous history that it must follow its own discipline without external interference. This need is met in the event (the Kairos) of Jesus the Christ which gives history meaning and purpose; this event determines the truth, the logos of history. He is the center of history, and in this center the transcendent meaning of history becomes immanent within history; but He claims nothing for Himself; He does not heteronomously impose Himself upon history. In this situation there is no special, religious way of "doing" history. There is not even a radical distinction between general and Biblical hermeneutics, although each retains the distinctiveness necessary for its respective inquiry (the first searches for the logos, the latter for the Logos).

Tillich characterizes this general type of situation as one of "theonomy". Theonomy means, in the particular situation which we are discussing[1], that the autonomy of reason is joined with the meaning of history which is received in Jesus Christ and through the process of revelation. The autonomy of reason (the logos) retains its integrity, and the event of Jesus Christ (the Logos) retains its centrality. Neither is imposed upon the other. The logos and the Logos are different[2], but they are both grounded in God; and because both are grounded in God, they are not in conflict. In the theonomous situation both point to God.

Here lies the answer to the problem which we posed in the Introduction to this thesis, and to which we have returned at several points. This problem is, on the one hand, that for the Christian view there is in history a supra-temporal element which cannot be reduced to historical terms; but which at the same time must not be set alongside of secular history as something which is strange and unrelated. On the other hand there is the rational theory that sacred history is nothing

(1) We are using certain concepts of Tillich's, but it cannot be assumed that he would agree with the use which is made of them.

(2) Dialectically it needs to be said that at all times in history sinful man is tempted to distort this difference so that the logos becomes a self-sufficient rationalism on the one hand, and on the other hand the Logos becomes a heteronomously imposed supernaturalism. There is never a complete theonomy.

but a part of general history; a theory which leaves the self-sufficient finitude of secular history untouched. This impossible situation is resolved by the understanding of history based upon the event of Jesus Christ and the attitude of theonomy.

> The divine, for such a state of mind, is not a problem but a presupposition. Its "givenness" is more certain than that of anything else. This situation finds expression, first of all, in the dominating power of the religious sphere, but not in such a way as to make religion a special form of life ruling over the other forms. Rather, religion is the life-blood, the inner power, the ultimate meaning of all life.. There is no profane nature or history, no profane ego, and no profane world. All history is sacred history...(1)

The confidence of history, its courage to be, is rooted in faith in God as its creative ground.(2)

(1) The Protestant Era, p.49.

(2) Cf. Systematic Theology, I, p.270.

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